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BY

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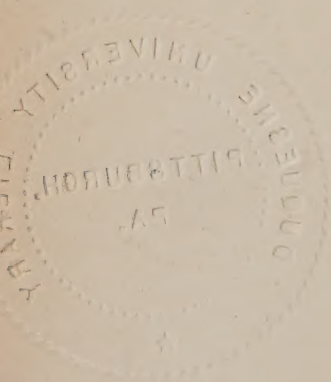
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PREFATORY LETTER
FROM H.E. CARDINAL MANNING.

There can be no doubt that a sermon, when preached, becomes public property, and that all who hear it, both friends and enemies, may make it their own by translation, alteration, or perversion. But they must not publish it to the world as the sermon of the preacher, unless they faithfully reproduce what he said. An edition, professing to be the sermons of Padre Agostino de Montefeltro translated by Miss Phillimore, has been widely circulated. Unfortunately, they gravely misrepresent, unintentionally, no doubt, the mind and often the words of Padre Agostino. His powerful and luminous exposition of Catholic dogma is omitted; and what remains is lowered and adapted to the intellectual standard of non-catholic readers. It has been, therefore, thought not only just to Padre Agostino, but wholesome to all readers, that his words and his mind should be fully and truly reproduced. With this view the present faithful and careful translation is now published.

HENRY EDWARD,

CARDINAL ARCHBISHOP.

Lond., Oct. 1, 1889.

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XVII.

JESUS CHRIST.

Exordium.—Friends, there is a Signal which rules the world with its thrones and potentates, and illuminates simultaneously both hemispheres, inundating them with its radiance. But is it a sign of union? No, it is a sign of discord. Men dispute about it, and it is the source of endless quarrels. Some adore and love it, others revile and reject it.

This high and exalted signal of contention among men is no other than Jesus Christ. I speak not of men in particular, for Jesus is a sign of contention to all men. The carnal man hateth Christ; it is the spiritual man who loves Him, and finds in Him the commencement of life and resurrection.

But I speak also of society and nations. A great signal of contention has been planted in the very centre of the social world, and this signal is Jesus Christ. O! wonder of wonders, we are continually told that nations in the present day are ready to embrace each other, and to form but one

family. Human thought, entrusted to metallic wires, is carried from one end of the earth to the other; the sides of rugged mountains, pierced by human skill, open easy passage to men and merchandise, and universal brotherhood is the burden of every song.

But there is an obstacle in the way of this fusion and unity of nations, and the obstacle is this same signal of contention, Jesus Christ. Men and nations are thereby separated, and divided into two worlds—a world which hates Jesus Christ, and another which loves Him. And each of these two worlds lives its own life.

The world which hates Jesus Christ boasts of the possession and progression of human wisdom which is active in uprooting the foundations of the faith. But the world which loves Jesus Christ has also its science—science which regulates all other science, for the truth of faith, like the truth of reason, emanates from God, and forms one single truth. The morality of the world which hates Jesus Christ comes neither from laws nor precepts, and depends on no one, or rather depends on the uncultivated instincts of our fallen nature.

And the world which loves Jesus has its morality, which is that taught by Him. The world which hates Jesus has its politics, which are short, clear,

and precise, and consist in banishing Jesus from its laws, morals, and schools.

The world which loves Jesus has also its politics, equally clear, simple, and precise; they consist in the recognition of Christ as God, and the admission that Christian Societies cannot exist without Him.

Finally, the world which hates Jesus has its power, and its power is terrible; it has its sword, which makes martyrs, and its laws, which fight against Christ. It has also numerical power, and that of the multitude who cried: "Crucify Him, crucify Him."

The world which adores Jesus Christ has also its power, based on His words: "Ye are of little number, but fear not, I have conquered the world." The power which conquers the world is faith, and nothing can prevail against it.

So that there are two distinct and separate worlds, between whom the great mark of distinction is Jesus Christ. And why? Because He is not known. If men knew Him they would love Him, and so their divisions which menace evil to our country and the world at large would cease.

Let us then seek, my friends, to study Jesus Christ, and let us inquire this morning what the Holy Scriptures say about it.

In the beginning God was all goodness and

bounty. Tertullian says: "God was only known by His wisdom and love." Fear nowhere existed, and from all creation a Canticle or Hymn of gratitude went up to Him. But men and angels created through their rebellion an abyss of justice and chastisement. There was a moment, so we read in the Apocalypse, when Divine wrath appeared to have taken the place of love. There was in Heaven a great and terrible silence, after which Lucifer and his followers were precipitated into the abyss. Adam and Eve were also banished from Eden, but being less guilty than the angels, did not suffer the same rigours of Divine justice. Although condemned to sufferings, although condemned to death, they had the consolation of hearing God say to the serpent, the cause of their ills: "I will place enmity between thee and the woman, between thy seed and her seed, and she will bruise thy head." And Adam and Eve, on leaving that garden of delights, carried this promise with them, and their descendants consoled themselves by the knowledge of their Day of Redemption. This belief in Redemption is the hope of the human race, and finds a place in all the religions of the world. These traditions do not always preserve their first purity; they are often corrupted by radical, and sometimes ridiculous, errors, but have never been cancelled from the

mind of man. Thus the East resounded with the prophecies of Balal, Greece assisted at the representations of her dramatic poets, Rome listened to Virgil, who announced a new King, and peace in all the world. Even in the forest of Germany, and in distant islands, we find scattered rays of this divine light. But in order that these rays should not be extinguished in Paganism, God made for Himself a people, the Jewish people, whom He led from nation to nation to reveal the marvels of the past, and the secrets of the future. Its mission was to prepare for Christ, and its existence was filled by Him from the time of Abraham to Advent. *Tota lex gravisda Christo.*

God revealed the mysteries of Christ through His people in various ways. First, by types. These types were facts, events, and personages who represented and prefigured the Messiah, like the portraits of a King who is expected, and who may be recognized by them. A type is a Divine sign which cannot be counterfeited; the Devil has been able to imitate miracles, but not types. Great personages, like Alexander, Cyrus, and John the Baptist, were announced beforehand, but not prefigured. But when it was question of Christ, says the angelic theologian, Saint Thomas, all the history of the Jewish people became one series of events and persons who represented Him and

anticipated His appearance. And he repeats with S. Augustine: "*Tota Scriptura Christum sonat.*"

The Pascal Lamb, the bronze serpent, the veil of the temple, the sands of the desert, are all signs of Christ, and of our Redemption, and all the memorable men of that nation represent Christ in some way or other. Abel killed by his brother, Melchisedeck who uses bread and wine in sacrifice, Isaac who ascends the mountain carrying wood for the holocaust, Joseph sold by his brethren, and afterward becoming their liberator; Moses, who saves the people from the slavery of the Pharaohs. Do not all these represent, do they not prefigure Christ? The holy man from the land of Huz leads us to Calvary, and to the Pretorium, whilst in Jonah's story we foresee the Resurrection.

O! friends, we might continue *ad infinitum* if we spoke of all the types of Jesus. He is represented everywhere; centuries succeed to centuries and show us the development of Christ. He is seen in everything; He is formed in the mind of man before being formed in the womb of the Virgin. The seers call upon Him, and it appears as though He answered them. They write His history even before He comes, and His story becomes familiar to them as a story of a friend.

O ! brethren, let us examine this biography, for it is the strongest argument for the Divinity of Christianity. Nothing is wanting. His genealogy descends from woman, who is to bruise the serpent's head. Her progeny is divided. But she comes out of that nation of which Abraham is the head, and to that nation God says: "In thee shall all nations of the earth be blessed." But Abraham has two sons, and God appears to Isaac and says to him: "All nations shall be blessed in thee, and in him who shall issue from thee." But also Isaac has two sons, Esau and Jacob, and God appears to Jacob and says to him: "I am the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, thy father, and I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and thy descendants shall be blessed, and in thee all the kings of the earth." But Jacob has twelve sons, heads of twelve tribes. Which is to be the tribe which shall convey the sacred blood ?

Jacob, lying on his death-bed, collects around him his twelve sons. God inspires him, and the holy old man, about to pass the portals of eternity, points out Judah as he from whom the Redeemer should come, and says: "Thy brethren shall adore thee, and the sceptre shall not pass from Judah until He shall come who ought to come, and who is the expectation of nations."

And from what family shall the Redeemer of

the world be born? Harken to Isaiah, the sublime and generous prophet: "There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse," and "the spirit of the Lord shall be upon Him." He shall be for a sign among the people, "and all nations shall turn unto Him." All the prophets agree in calling David the progenitor of the Messiah. But who of the family of David should give Him birth? Listen once more to Isaiah: "Listen," he says to the House of David, "and hearken to the prodigies of the God of Israel. The Lord Himself shall give you a sign. Behold, a Virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and His name shall be called Emmanuel." He will be the light of the human race, and He shall be called "Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace."

And now wait and you will see the blood which is to animate the heart of the Messiah descend from the sinful to the immaculate woman, from Noah to Abraham, from Abraham to Isaac, from Isaac to Jacob, from Jacob to Judah, from Judah to Jesus, from Jesus to Mary.

O! friends, who has ever seen anything similar? The evangelists narrate it, which renders it authentic, and the prophets had announced Him thousands of years ago. But where, where is this Redeemer to be born?

Listen to Micah: "And thou, Bethlehem, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come, the Ruler of Israel. And for this thou shalt be great, and abide unto the ends of the earth."

Thus, brethren, prophecy not only speaks of the people, and the tribe, but even of the birth-place of Jesus. But when will He come? Before the subjection of the Jewish nation, says Jacob, and Daniel says: He will come in the seventh week after the promulgation of the edict. And Malachi, that before the second temple be destroyed by a foreign nation an envoy extraordinary will prepare His way. "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare His way before me," and the deserts shall resound to the sound of his voice. But tell me, my brethren, Is not all **this** wonderful? Does it not constrain us to worship and admire?

Do not let us stop here. The prophets also foresaw all the circumstances of His birth. David saw the Kings of Arabia bringing Him gifts. He saw the gold, and the frankincense. And is this all? Did they know nothing of His life? Ah! yes, they knew all His greatness and all His glory. The prophets foresaw Him seated on the highest throne of the earth, dominating the world by His Church, and foresaw His Kingdom without end.

But did they foresee His sufferings? Listen, and you will hear them relate His griefs and His humiliation. He is to live as a pilgrim upon the earth; He is to make no rumour, nor cry, nor cause His voice to be heard in the streets; the bruised reed He will not break, nor quench the smoking flax. In poverty He shall be born, in poverty He shall toil, and in His childhood shall He be sweet, obedient, and pacific.

This shall be the commencement of His life in Bethlehem and Nazareth. He will go in search of the lost sheep of the fold. He will raise the fallen, strengthen the weak, encourage the strong, and lead them all into the way of justice.

He will console the afflicted, will work miracles in favour of the blind, the deaf, the mute, and, in spite of the light of His Divine word, will be a source of scandal to many Jews. Listen to the story of His passion and death. He was to be without beauty, without splendour, when we shall see Him there is no beauty that we should desire Him; He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows, the chastisement of our peace is upon Him, we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities, the punishment of

our sins was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed. He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth.

Tell me, brethren, does it not seem as though we were present at Calvary, at the Pretorium, and all those agonizing scenes?

But the prophets did not stop here; they not only predicted all least grandeurs, and the least of Christ's sufferings, they did more, they foresaw the people conspiring against Jesus, they saw them put to flight. They saw one of the disciples rise from the table, sell his Lord for thirty pieces of silver and betray Him with a kiss. They saw Jesus buffeted, derided, insulted—they counted His bones—they saw His torn hands and His feet—they saw Him drink gall and vinegar—they saw the soldiers cast lots on His garment—they saw Him descend into the tomb—they saw Him ascend from the tomb to His Father in the glory of Heaven. They saw His glorious sepulchre and His universal sacrifice.

This, brethren, is what the prophets saw. And yet this is only a cursory view of it. Take, O, take those books where all appears like a living picture—like a full and complete biography.

And then we must exclaim with Bossuet, What a marvellous sequence! How is it possible not to

see in it the finger of God? What shall we oppose to this universal concord of events, to this cloud of witnesses, who heralded the coming of Christ so many centuries in advance? Shall we say the prophets were agreed together? The difference in times and places renders such an idea impossible. Shall we dare to cast a doubt upon the authenticity of the prophecies? This would be impossible, for they were unknown before the coming of Jesus Christ, and about five hundred years elapsed from the last of the prophecies to their fulfilment, and in order to render the smallest doubt impossible, Divine Providence ordained that under the reign of Ptolemy, King of Egypt, thirty years before Christ, these prophecies were translated, and this translation, called "The Translation of the Seventy," was already in circulation. Shall we say that they were the effect of accident? But their variety and multiplicity would counteract such an idea, and their harmony clearly shows that they cannot be attributed to the calculations of men, and one must be senseless not to see that such a concatenation of oracles is the work of God.

The diversity of the instruments employed by Him in tracing these pictures of greatness and mercy, and the ineffable harmony resulting from them, prove that they cannot be the result of caprice or

accident, but of the free exercise of His *wisdom* and of His *power*. But were these prophecies fulfilled in Jesus? We need only read the gospel to be convinced of it. The harmony which exists between the Old and New Testaments is such that if we had not the certainty of the antiquity of the prophecies, we might believe that particulars, so clear and precise, must have been related by historians after the events, and not announced beforehand by the prophets. Yes, brethren, the prophecies were all fulfilled, so that in reading the text one hardly knows where to look for them, whether in the evangelical or prophetical pages. Put them together, confront them, and their agreement appears and the application is evident. The prophets, said S. Peter, are witnesses who depose in favour of Jesus, and who are worthy of all credit. The Apostles invoked the prophecies to convince the Jews, and whilst using other arguments to other people, to their own compatriots they made use of this, as the most convincing.

St. Peter often has recourse to it for the conversion of nations, and after having appealed to the voice from Mount Tabor, he appeals to prophecy. S. Paul spends his life in showing forth Jesus Christ in the laws of *Moses*, and in the *Predictions of the Prophets*. You may reply: But

the prophets foretold that the Messiah should come like a powerful King to sit on the throne of David, that He should extend His Kingdom over all the earth, that He should defeat His enemies, and that His empire should be eternal. But remember that they also foretold His sufferings and the shame of the Cross. This brilliant picture was no exaggeration, and may be understood as realized in the Messiah, inasmuch as He possessed the truest greatness, the greatness of the *Supernatural*. Has not even unrecognized genius its *diadem*? Has not holiness its *halo*, though unappreciated by the wise of this world? Let us consider the Kingdom of God at its just value. And, in fact, what kingdom can be compared to that of Christ, whose supremacy is that of the heart and conscience?

Has it not defeated its enemies? Has it not conquered the spirit of evil? Thus Christ, the object of the Christian's faith, hope, and justice, is the centre of the two Testaments, the Synthesis of the world, and the centre of Humanity, which is divided into two portions, His Expectation and His Advent. But, it may be said, the Jews did not recognize Jesus Christ. And this is a further proof of victory by demonstrating the infallibility of prophecy; it is the last seal to the Divinity of

Christianity, because the fact of their rejection of Him was predicted.

Perhaps you will pretend that these predictions were fulfilled by chance. "There is no such thing as 1,000 years of chance," says Lacordaire, "or that Jesus Christ had studied the prophecies and adapted His life to them." Oh, the credulity of the incredulous! How could He adapt His life to such numerous prophecies? How could He, as man, choose the place and time of His birth? How find a Judas to sell Him for thirty pieces of silver, and after having betrayed Him to go and hang himself? How die upon the Cross, rise again, make Himself known and adored like God?

O, my God! my God! Thou who didst illuminate the prophets, illuminate us also, that we may know the vanity of all science which would exalt itself against Thee, fill our hearts with feelings of adoration and love, and induce us to accept and receive Him as the true Messiah and Redeemer of men.

For this, brethren, is our first duty toward Jesus, to receive and accept Him.

But how is this sacred duty understood in our day? Friends, remember what happened at His passion and at His death. When Jesus, from the

heights of the Cross, spoke the sublime words: *Consummatum est*, two facts took place, which developed and embraced the history of humanity. Two kinds of persons passed before the Cross. Some looked at Jesus and cursed Him, and insulted even to His death the God who opened His arms to the people; others listened to His voice, and uttered a cry which has come down to us through all ages: "*Charitas Christi urget nos.*"

This, my friends, is what we see every day. Many love Jesus; many, on the contrary, reject Him, and reject Him—would you believe it?—in the name of liberty.

They say, Human nature is sufficient; we do not want His religion, you cannot force a benefit on people who do not want it; we do not want this benefit.

But, my friends, how is this? A God has come down to earth for love of us; has taken our human nature upon Him; has spoken our language; has assumed our likeness—a God who has healed the sick and raised the dead to life. A God, my friends, who exposed Himself to outrage and injury, was torn with scourges, crowned with thorns, nailed upon the Cross, and died for us in the extremest of agonies.

A God, and we can reject Him, and deride Him. Let us not deceive ourselves, brethren, let

us not deceive ourselves. Love is not a plaything; we cannot trifle with impunity with the love of God—of a God who hath loved us even unto death.

And for this reason it is written that love is more to be feared than justice, and that we should beware rather of the wrath of the Lamb than of the Lion, for love is either life or death, and here is a question of eternal life or eternal death.

And to this God who came into the world and submitted to all conceivable sufferings for our salvation; to this God who shows us His wounds, inflicted for love of us; to this God who in exchange only asks for a little affection, we cannot say: "I know Thee not." To say so would be folly, ruin, and madness. Jesus Christ could not appear in our horizon as a star without satellites, a sun without constellations, obliged to revolve in a void without encountering other bodies. If He be God, humanity must be directed and conducted by Him, it must form a part of His centre and gravitate round Him. And if any being would detach itself from Him it will encounter the fate of the satellite detached from its planet, of the planet detached from its sun.

Friends, all the rumours and all the facts which preceded the coming of Jesus Christ can be summed up in this cry—in the cry of St. Paul:

Oportet Christum regnare. Yes, friends, we must cry: It is needful that Christ should reign. It is our one great and supreme necessity, the necessity of heaven and earth.

Oportet! Oportet!

In the Divine design all is subordinate; all creatures need God, and every intelligent man ought to acknowledge and proclaim Him. It is needful that Jesus Christ should reign.

But, alas, the world and hell united have vainly endeavoured for nineteen centuries to prevent the fulfilment of these words.

And if we look round the world, and inquire into history, we see powerful empires crumbled to dust, systems which have disappeared, the best organized constitutions and the most Utopian schemes swept away by Time like cobwebs, but *the Kingdom of Jesus Christ lasting for ever.*

How many universally proclaimed kings of thought and kings of the world, after making a little noise with their arms or their words, have disappeared entirely? Scarcely a memory remains of them, and even their followers and admirers are gone. But *the Kingdom of Jesus Christ endures for ever.*

Nowadays men profess to doubt all history, and would destroy its proofs in order to destroy the Kingdom of Christ.

But do you believe that Jesus Christ is God, or do you not believe it?

If you do not believe it, then His Kingdom and His religion is only a human kingdom and a human work; and since it is a very, very old work, much older, indeed, than you think it, and still not deprived of vigour, you might, surely, leave it to die a natural death.

But if you believe that Jesus Christ is God, why, why work so hard to destroy His work? The work of God cannot be destroyed. It fears neither the wrath of man nor the intellect of man.

Take heed lest your wrath only add a fresh proof to the words of the Prophet, whose eye seeth into the future. Take heed lest you pass away like a Caiaphas or a Nero, without leaving a trace behind you, and *the Kingdom of Christ endures for ever*.

It is now two thousand five hundred years since Isaiah prophesied the fall of the people who would not serve Christ. *Oportet illum regnare*.

Christ shall reign so long as He shall have enemies to defeat, and you know that this was what David announced, so that the Prophet agrees with the Apostle, the Old Testament is confirmed by the New, while the centuries corroborate both and change into history the prophecies of Christ.

See, brethren, the ages of the world passing

before the Cross, and, as they pass, they bend before it, and seem to cry, "Christ conquers, Christ commands, Christ reigns." This prophetic cry has now been uttered for nineteen centuries. I know not if our age will be succeeded by another age, but this I know, that nothing will change or disturb the harmony of events, for God's covenants are unchangeable, and He has sworn that the Kingdom of Christ will never end. "*Regno ejus non erit finis.*"

And when the Sun, like a giant fatigued by his labours, shall repose among the ruins of the starry heavens, no more to rise again, the Cross which was planted on the earth beneath, to teach men to suffer and to hope, shall be raised in heaven, where shall be sung for ever the refrain: "*Christ conquers, Christ reigns, Christ triumphs.*"

XVIII.

CHRIST THE GOD-MAN.

Exordium.—In looking back, brethren, through Time, do we not perceive a radiant image, a central point in creation, before which all greatness bows, all glory pales, so dazzling is the halo of grandeur, power, and goodness which surrounds it?

Do we not hear the echo of a name wafted to us by sonorous winds from every quarter of the earth? And in the air breathed by us during the last two thousand years, in the events which agitate us, in the virtue which transforms us, do we not discern that spark of life which was never visible in the history of ancient nations?

Would we know that which stirs the fibres of our soul with promises and hopes of the future? We must fix our eyes on that form, we must fix our mind on that name, we must seek to understand and fructify the germ of life. "*Petebant videre Jesum qui esset.*" This is our vocation. Through this we must penetrate into the intimate life and virtue of the Saviour.

But, alas! what place does He occupy in our

minds and hearts? I glance around, I listen to the aspirations of souls, and what do I see and hear? Of all researches, the most neglected and despised is that of Jesus; of all the schools, the least frequented is that which teaches Jesus; of all the sciences, the most abandoned is that which Jesus taught.

Some memory of early days, some phrase heard in church, some echo repeated in the family, some hasty and passing glance at Christ, is all that is left of Jesus for the young man about to encounter the seductions of life, for the maiden who should be the angel of the domestic hearth, or for him who ought to be the oracle of truth and justice. Alas, my God! are then the dark days of Paganism come back again? and has the beautiful star of Jacob become to us, through our ignorance, only a pale and struggling ray? Christians there are to whom the name of Jesus is but a sound—but a dead letter. There are Christians who contemplate Jesus only to distort His lineaments, only to misconstrue His marvellous perfections. There are Christians who bow before the Cross without understanding the effects of redemption. There are Christians who speak of Christianity without knowing Christ, the ark of wisdom and knowledge, and who know not where to light the lamps which are to guide their life.

Alas! ere long the mourning angels will have to write on our altars and on the Cross the words which are sculptured on the Areopagus: "*Deo ignoto*"—"To the unknown God."

Unknown in His example, for His life is no longer the light for ours; unknown in His doctrine, which no longer awakens an echo in our souls; unknown in His mysteries, which no longer penetrate our hearts; unknown in His symbols, which we no longer remember, and of which we no longer preserve the sense; unknown by all, in the manger, in the tomb, on the altars, in His kingdom; unknown till the day of the last Judgment, in which the wrath of God will show Him forth to the terrified nations refulgent with the light reflected from His countenance.

Then must we know Him in the majesty of His power; then must we contemplate Him in the glory of His divinity; then must we know Him in the wounds of His heart, in His work of love; then must we accept His judgment and the oracles of His wisdom.

But in the presence of this wisdom, and of the despised treasures of His love, what remorse of conscience, what bitter tears, what anathemas through all eternity! Then the incredulous and the indifferent will see the Holy Spirit, and will utter cries of anguish and despair. Let me ex-

claim with S. Jerome, who consumed his life in works for the glory of the Church, "What will those then feel about the time they have lost in the studies of Paganism? What will God say to those who raise all to the dignity of science, save those things which are Christ's?"

That we, at least, may not fall into this miserable error, let us continue the study we began yesterday. We then considered the Biography of Christ as written by the Prophets; to-day we will contemplate His portrait as the Evangelists have drawn it, and ask ourselves what feelings ought to be awakened in us by this august picture.

Who is Jesus Christ? Hear the reply of the Evangelist: "In the beginning was the word, and the word was God. Everything was made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made." And further: "The word was made man and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, the glory of the only-begotten Son of the Father." So begins the Gospel of S. John. Impossible to affirm more explicitly the Divinity of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the word made flesh, but the "Word" is "God," therefore Jesus Christ is God. "Thou shalt conceive a Son, who shall be called Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High," etc.

Thus the angel announced to Mary that of her should be born the Son of the Most High; nor was it a question of a metaphoric or adaptive sonship, but of a natural sonship. And since He is to be born of Mary, He will be at the same time son of Mary, and son of the Most High. A son repeats in himself the nature of his parents. Therefore Jesus Christ on one side draws His being from His mother and becomes man; on the other from the Most High. The Most High is God, therefore Jesus Christ is God. God, says S. Paul, has spoken to us by His Son. But who is this Son? Some thaumaturg perhaps—a man more learned than his fellows, but still a man? Listen to the Lord: “Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.” Therefore there is in Him a Divine essence, begotten and proceeding from God, which essence cannot proceed without His eternity, unity, and majesty. In fact, from a God can only come forth a God, His Divine substance not admitting either division or diminution. Other words of the great Apostle are also conclusive. Jesus Christ is the brightness of the glory of the Father, therefore, of necessity, Christ is God. In fact, the light wherewith God shines is a light which, being uncreated, shines by its own power. The ray emanates from the sun, and its brightness is not separate from it; in like manner the Son is

not separate from the Father. And what is this, but to be God? But at the same time, says the Gospel, Christ is man. S. Matthew and S. Luke inform us of His ancestors according to the flesh, and bring us back with wonderful precision to the last Princes of Judah, from Zerubabel to David, to Jacob, to Isaac, even to Abraham, and from patriarch to patriarch, from king to king, through an uninterrupted series, up to the first man, up to God. And is not this blood, whose origin we trace in history, the blood of the son of man? God, says S. Paul, has begotten Him of the blood of David. Heresies have existed denying the mother of Jesus to be the mother of God. But the Gospel says, "*Factum ex muliere.*"

Heretics have said that the body of Jesus came from God as an etheriel body of imaginary humanity; but, instead, it was made from woman. "*Factum ex muliere.*" Therefore it was made from flesh. "*Verbum caro factum est.*" It was by the operation of the Holy Ghost that a Virgin conceived, therefore she is the mother of God. In this manner, therefore, are the human and divine natures united in Christ, in whom this union is continually manifest. To begin with His birth. What a birth! Complete destitution, total abandonment; for shelter a stable, for cradle a manger. This is the birth of the Son

of *man*. But the Heavens open, legions of angels descend, a marvellous star appears, shepherds and Magi, great and small, Jews and Gentiles, hasten to bow down and adore Him; Herod trembles and hides his fear under the mask of a false respect, angelic voices sing "Glory to God in the Highest, and Peace on earth to men of good will." Is not this the descent of the Son of God?

Forty days after His birth He is carried to the temple, and is ransomed by the offer of two young pigeons. This is the offering of poverty of the Son of Man; but there He is recognized by an aged man, living in expectation of the Saviour, who salutes Him as the Messiah, as the light that should shine on the Gentiles. Is not this the mission of the Son of God?

Persecuted by Herod, He is forced to take refuge in a foreign land. This is the exile of the man. But the angel warns Joseph, and the Magi, also miraculously warned, take another road. Does not this show the passage of a God?

He grows, grows in age, as in knowledge. His tongue is loosed gradually, as also His thoughts. This is a human condition. At twelve years old He enters among the doctors. At first He asks them questions, then reveals Himself in all His wisdom, and all are astonished at Him. This is the wisdom of God. Joseph admires in respectful

silence, but Mary cannot contain the impulse of her maternal heart. She frames a gentle reproof. "My son, why has thou so done? Behold we have sought thee sorrowing." It is the man who is accused. But Jesus answers: "Why did you seek me? Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?" Sublime reply, which in its brevity reveals to us that He does not acknowledge other father than God, and that the business of God is His. You must seek Him in no other place than in the house of God. Later on He will chase the buyers and sellers from the temple, saying to them: "Hence, you would make my Father's house a house for business." But to-day He there fulfils His work, He there affirms His sonship. The temple is full of the glory of Jehovah, of the glory of His Father.

It is God justifying Himself. He goes to Jordan, He bows to receive the baptism of the Baptist. Behold the *man*! But the Heavens open over His head; the Holy Spirit descends in visible form upon Him, and the voice of the Father says: "This is my beloved Son." This is God.

In the desert He chooses to suffer temptations as a man, but by a few words He drives away Satan as God. He suffers hunger like a man, but the angels come to minister food to Him, because He is God. He goes to sleep in a ship in

the midst of His disciples, while the sea is troubled by a storm. It is the man who is reposing, but the sea becomes miraculously calm, and all exclaim: "Who is this, whom the winds and the sea obey?" It is God who commands.

He shows Himself subject to our infirmities to prove that He is man, but heals the sick to show that He is God. He retreats, hiding Himself from his persecutors in His human weakness, but the evil spirits flee before Him.

He is accused as an impostor, being man; but Moses and Elias appear to testify that He is God. He weeps at the tomb of Lazarus, and grieves as man, but he subsequently orders death to restore its prey. As Son of man He has not where to lay His head; as Son of God, with a few loaves and a few fishes, He feeds a multitude. He calls Himself "Son of Man," but at the same time He calls Himself "Son of God," and says: "I and my Father are one." As Son of God He pours forth light; as Son of man He bows under the scourge.

As Son of God He heals infirmities, leprosy disappears, the deaf hear, the blind see, the dumb speak, the paralytic follow Him; as Son of man He remains helpless and speechless before His enemies. See Him in the supper-room, washing the feet of His apostles, and we hail the Son of man performing this act of humility; hear Him

reproving them for what is passing in their minds, and by this, His knowledge, we recognize the Son of God. See Him in Gethsemane, alone, abandoned by His own, who are sleeping while He goes to die for them. He is man in this solitude. But He rises up with majesty and with an ineffable serenity. We hear Him say that the hour of the powers of darkness is come, the hour of betrayal; we see Him confronting His enemies, who fall to the ground at His words. It is the Majesty of God revealing itself. Follow Him to the Tribunal, where He is denied, betrayed, accused, and abused by all, a crown of thorns placed upon His head, a purple robe upon His lacerated shoulders, in His hands a reed as sceptre in derision. Priests and doctors of the law surround and oppress Him with accusations; the people demand His death. This is man in his ignominy. But when He menaces Caiaphas, accepts the title of King, speaks of truth to Pilate, imposes silence on Herod, till those who have denied Him weep, He is God in the exercise of His rights, God who dominates all the Potentates of the earth, God who inspires traitors with terrible remorse, who terrifies Judges, who receives penitent hearts. The Judges have dragged Him before them, because He is the Son of man; none dare to judge Him, because He is the Son of God. Behold Him on the Cross; His enemies pass

before Him, smile, wagging their heads, defy, and insult Him. This is His agony as *man*, but the sun grows pale, the earth trembles, the rocks are rent, the tombs open; it is the mourning for the death of a God. He dies, and we are constrained to say, "So ends the man." But at the moment of dying, after having uttered a cry of superhuman power, we are constrained to say with the Centurion, "Truly this is the Son of God." Behold the portrait of Christ; in Him you find a double type. God and man are in Him so narrowly united that you cannot separate them without destroying their personality or admitting an absurdity. But now it is that Christ above all shows Himself God and man. He is placed in the sepulchre, and He arises again. Let us pause before this fact, the greatest miracle He performed, and which alone would suffice to furnish us with summary and peremptory proof that Christ is God-man. Jesus, speaking of His resurrection, held it forth as the most luminous proof of His Divine mission, and S. Paul does not hesitate to say that our hopes would be vain were not Christ risen. The enemies of Christ, who had understood this truth, placed guards around the sepulchre in order to avoid any trickery, and during the course of ages all the enemies of religion have done their best to

destroy the evidence of the resurrection of Christ. But, my friends, this resurrection of Christ, is it as really true and certain a fact as it is important? To make this clear, it is sufficient to prove that when Christ was placed in the tomb He was really dead, and that afterwards He appeared full of life. When he was placed in the tomb, was Jesus dead? The Evangelists, who alone would be sufficient testimony, and S. John, an ocular witness, affirm it in explicit terms. "*Expiravit.*"

On the other hand, how could one doubt it, if we consider all that He suffered before being nailed to the Cross? Indeed, it is astonishing that He could have endured for three long hours more the torture of the Cross. The Jewish historian, Josephus, says: "The Crucifixion alone would have sufficed to put Jesus to death; and for this reason the soldiers did not break His legs, because they found that He was dead already." And Pilate, according to Joseph of Arimathea, did not deliver up the body till he was assured of His death. And the spear-wound which transfixed Him—was it not sufficient to take away life, piercing the heart? And if the Jews had had the least doubt concerning the death of Jesus, they would not certainly have hesitated to snatch from Him the last breath of life; they who placed guards around His tomb for fear lest the people

should carry Him away and cause Him to pass for resuscitated. Mark well that neither the Sanhedrim, nor the Rabbis, nor the Greek and Roman Sophists, have ever thought of denying the death of Jesus Christ. This glory was reserved for the Rationalists of our day. And what have they pretended? That He was deposed from the Cross in a state of syncope, in a state of asphyxia or of fainting; but that, notwithstanding this, He preserved the essence of life. But these are conjectures, these are chimeras and suppositions, solemnly denied by all the data of history. They have also pretended that the substances applied to the body in embalmment healed the wounds, and that the air thus charged with aromatic emanations may have reawakened in Jesus the spirit of life.

But these, my friends, are only vain words. The faculty has proved that the hollow enclosure of the tomb acts as an asphyxiant power, and that those aromas, so excellent in preserving the body of a dead person, would, on the contrary, kill the living, and that they would have been, therefore, adapted to render real the apparent death of Jesus.

The faculty has also proved that the cold air of the tomb was certainly the least adapted to restore Jesus to life, and, finally, that

three days would not have sufficed to heal His wounds.

They have finally observed that the Greek word used to indicate wound does not mean a deep wound, but rather a slight wound. But O, the blood and water that issued from that wound—does it not prove that the heart was pierced and that in consequence the wound was mortal? Who does not perceive the weakness of our adversaries' arguments?

Jesus Christ then is really dead. But is He really risen again? I cannot understand, how one can doubt it. The fact has been related by eye-witnesses who, having seen Jesus expire, saw Him again in the midst of them, and that not during sleep, nor in a vision, but during the day, and in the full possession of their faculties; and they not only saw Him, but heard Him, touched Him, sat with Him, and not only once, but during forty days, many times, and under different circumstances; not in one place, but in many—in the public way as in the supper-chamber; on the shore of the sea and on the mount of Galilee. It may be pretended that these were mere fanciful apparitions. But Jesus eats, drinks—He has a body with flesh and bones. Fanciful! But Jesus allows Himself to be handled by Saint Thomas, who doubted of the Resurrection, and

who thereupon believes, constrained thereto by evidence. And how is it that the apostles who were so timid at the time of His passion, who showed themselves so backward to believe in His Resurrection—how is it that they began all at once so boldly to affirm this same Resurrection, even by their death?

It was pretended that the body of Jesus was stolen, that the disciples took it away by night while the guard slept; this was the invention of the Pharisees and High Priests. But who does not feel the absurdity of such a subterfuge? In the first place, the apostles of Jesus Christ could not have entertained this idea, for men do not willingly throw themselves into perilous adventures without serious motives, and the majority would not have united in so execrable a plot, unless urged by strong interest. Now, what motive, what interest could the disciples of Jesus have had? Either they believed in the Resurrection or they doubted it. If they believed, it was useless to carry away His body. If they did not believe, nothing remained to them but to give up the cause of a man in whom they had no longer any faith. If, on the contrary, they doubted, as seems probable, plain good sense required that they should await events, to decide if the Resurrection was a true fact. Unless they were all

insane, or all agreed together—for a mutual agreement was indispensable—otherwise they could not have unanimously conceived the idea.

On the contrary, everything united and concurred to induce them to renounce an enterprise so full of perils. They were surrounded by the enemies of Christ, by those who had crucified Him, and who certainly would not have spared them either outrages or insults; besides which, they knew that there was a God above ready to prepare a judgment for lies and imposture. Moreover, they were certain to fail, for how could twelve fishermen, poor and illiterate, without learning or education, conceive and realize so insane a project as the adoration of a man dead upon a cross? If Christ were not truly resuscitated they would have been obliged to admit that He was a great impostor, such as He was accused of being; and, for an impostor, would they have exposed themselves to such perils?

Let us allow even this. Let us suppose that the disciples had conceived the idea of stealing away the body of Jesus. How were they to carry out their design? The tomb was excavated in a rock; against the stone which covered it were placed the seals of the State, around it watched the guards.

How could they approach? Would they have recourse to violence?

Is it probable that these men, so timorous, so hesitating, that they abandoned their Divine Master in the moment of His passion, would have had sufficient courage to assail the guards, and break the seals of State? And if they had done it, how was it that the attempt was not known? Why did they remain unpunished? Did they corrupt the guard? But they were poor and despised. How could they have bribed them? Perchance they had recourse to artifice. But what difficulties before succeeding. How did they arrive at the sepulchre? Perhaps by a subterranean way. But how could they excavate the rock in one night without the knowledge of the guards? How close the aperture without leaving traces? And how unwrap the corpse of Christ, how rewrap it in the Sudarium, how overturn the stone? But could they have arrived by the common path? How could they pass through the soldiers, unwrap the corpse, take the body of Jesus, overturn the stone, and go away without anyone being aware of it?

It is pretended that "the soldiers slept." O! strange indeed! All the guards slept while they were placed there on purpose to hinder any impos-

ture! O! go and make this proposal to our city guard, and you will hear their answer! And then, as S. Augustin remarks, if all slept, how could they see the body of Jesus carried away? Why were not the delinquents punished? Why did not the Jews more especially reprove the apostles for having stolen the body of Jesus?

Thus to whatever side we turn we see that iniquity is fallen into its own snare, and that falsehood has lied to itself.

Let us again suppose that the disciples had been able to obtain the body of Jesus Christ, how could they have persuaded the world that He was risen again, and that He was true God?

A man condemned by human justice, a man dead of an opprobrious death upon the Cross, is He true God? Who does not see the difficulties and the obstacles of such a design? In the first place they must have been agreed, they must have engaged themselves to endure all kinds of torments, and even death, to ensure success; they must have deceived those who had not taken part in it; they must have persuaded them of the truth of appearances, in order to attest them, even in the face of death. It would be needful also to deceive the Gentiles, who considered the Cross of Christ as folly. It would be necessary also to deceive the Jews, whose interest it was to make

Jesus pass for an impostor, having accused Him as such.

Beside this, there is another insurmountable difficulty. They must finally convert the world by a simple affirmation, devoid of miracles, because God cannot do miracles to protect and confirm an imposture.

Was all this possible? No. Therefore Christ is really risen from the dead.

“If we,” says Strauss, “cannot find a method to explain the resurrection of Christ, we ought to retract what we have said; we must renounce our theory.” And to this end he studied much, and made great researches, in order to explain how the body of Christ could have disappeared; and at the end of them arrived at a most irrational conclusion. He has pretended that the body of Christ remained in the tomb. But is not this contrary to the writings of the Evangelists? Would not the Jews have seized on the body to destroy the evidence of the Resurrection? Renan says that it is an idle question, an insoluble question, but he feels its importance; and, at the same time that he affirms it to be a useless question, he ends by saying that the body disappeared by accident! So that for Renan, as for Strauss, the Resurrection of Jesus is the result of an hallucination, the fruit of a diseased mind. But after the positive

proofs brought forward, need we stop to combat the gratuitous assertions of our enemies? Thus the disciples thought to see that which they did not see, to hear that which they did not hear, to touch that which they did not touch. Is not all this opposed to what the Evangelists have written? They show us how the disciples were slow to believe; how they were not satisfied with the testimony of God, and of their companions, nor even by that of their own senses; how, in order to convince them, Jesus Christ was obliged not only to show Himself, but to allow them to touch and feel Him. And observe, they must otherwise have been all victims of an hallucination; and further, which is more wonderful, this hallucination must have lasted forty days, after which it must have disappeared, and no more been heard of it. The overturning of the stone, the terror of the guards—was this also the effect of hallucination? And were the guards also affected by it? Must we not say of those who write such things that they either want to make fools of those who read, or that they are themselves under the influence of an hallucination? But let us allow every impossibility. One thing still remains to be explained. How could Christianity, based upon an illusion, have been able to establish and preserve itself in the midst of the world?

Our opponents pretend that the books which relate these facts are not historic, that they are of a merely legendary character. Let us leave this argument of prescription; let us leave even this positive proof, which is found to be in accordance with the writings of the early Christians, as well as with those of the heretics and Gentiles of the same epoch. The latter combatted the Holy Books, but never denied their authenticity. Let us allow that these authors have been unable to deceive us about these facts, because they saw them themselves, or they heard them related by eye-witnesses; that they could not have deceived us, because they gained nothing by doing so, but had to expect, on the contrary, what afterward occurred, torments and death; and let us ask how these poor fishermen, without education or letters, could have composed a relation of so grand and sublime a character? Look into yourselves, awake your memories. Do you feel within you capabilities for imagining such a history, for portraying a picture of such fascinating moral beauty as that which shows us Mary, Joseph, and Elizabeth? Could you conceive of your own intellect a hero of as great a character, of as pure a life, of a doctrine as sublime, of such ineffable holiness, as that of Jesus Christ?

Do you feel your capability to write seriously

that a Virgin conceives, and bears a child, and remains a Virgin? That her son is the work of the Holy Spirit? Would you have felt the courage to predict that to this son should be given the pompous titles of Messiah and Saviour? To predict, at the risk of refutation from the future, that His reign will last eternally, and His glory reflect refulgently on His mother? Would you have the talent to interweave poetic traits with all these prophecies in superhuman sublimity, to create dramatic occasions, to compose a tragedy so full of contrasts, to carry to its highest grade the powers of the unforeseen, to draw the story of a life in which a double character is for ever represented, a character of humiliation and glory, a character of strength and weakness which never gainsays itself? Tell me, could you do this? Consult the past, look around you. Of all the literary celebrities that you know, is there one who would be capable of writing such pages? Man, left to his own genius, could never have done it. And, moreover, does it lie in his power to win the credence of humanity for such facts as the offspring of a Virgin, the sufferings and death of a God? Could he have retained nineteen centuries of time as his accomplice in this gigantic imposture? Was it in his power to raise to Jesus that glorious throne from which

He shall never descend? Can a man do it? Is it of a man: is it human? Interrogate your reason and your good sense, and they will tell you "No."

Therefore, these pages are historic; therefore, these pages are inspired; therefore, if you are logical, you must deduce that Jesus Christ is *God-man*.

If Jesus Christ is *God-man*, Jesus is the *Word* which descended on the earth, who took our flesh, to raise us up and take us to Heaven.

Before this portrait of Jesus Christ drawn for us by the Evangelists, what is our duty? Our duty is to believe and to adore Him. The *Arts* have done so, *Genius* has done so, *Science* has done so, all great men have done so, and so ought we to do.

The *Arts* have done so. Yes, the arts have believed in Jesus Christ, and, sustained and inspired by the faith, have sculptured marble, have given breath to canvas, have animated clay, have cast medals.

And the world has seen magnificent cathedrals, and basilicas arise—real poems in stone—to sing the praises of Jesus Christ.

Genius also has believed in Jesus, and has raised to Him imperishable monuments. Apologists have beaten His enemies with their inflexible logic;

orators have celebrated His triumphs with winged words ; poets and musicians have consecrated their lyres to Jesus Christ by those inspirations which recall on earth the songs and harmonies of Heaven.

Science also has done likewise. It has consecrated to Jesus Christ its researches for the triumph of the faith ; and not being led astray by sophisms, it has raised around the Christian dogma a powerful rampart, against which the weapons of the incredulous are broken in pieces.

All *great men* have believed in Jesus. Has not the faith of Christ sat upon thrones ? Has it not been the faith of great Kings, of the founders of Republics ? Yes, we know it ; Monarchies have raised the standard of the Cross of Jesus, and Republics, especially our finest and strongest Republics, have been born and grown up in the shadow of His Cross ; indeed, one of our Republics chose Christ for its King. And is it not the faith of Jesus Christ which has inspired generous hearts with the spirit of charity and sacrifice for the poor and suffering ? Was it not for the faith and for the love of Jesus Christ that the martyrs divided their mantles with the poor ; that the Elizabeths gave their crowns ; that the Teresas, angels of beauty, renounced the seductions of the world ; that the Vincents de Paul gave up their

liberty; that the Francis of Assisi and the Borromeos consecrated their goods and their fortune? And to-day, in spite of all the efforts of the school of Voltaire, does not the faith of Christ embrace all that is greatest, most sublime, in art and science? You may, indeed, oppose to these facts the negation of some one apostate; the abjuration of some one renegade. But what is, after all, the voice of a journalist, or a novelist, the voice of a professor, compared with the voice of the people, who repeat with the Prince of the Apostles, "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God," and with the Church, "We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we adore Thee, O our Lord Jesus Christ?"

And what in comparison is the legion of error of the present day compared with the immense army of believers, spread over all parts of the globe and in all the degrees of the intellectual hierarchy which proclaim the Divinity of Jesus Christ!

What is the word of those who deny His Divinity compared with that of those who affirm it? Which will endure? Observe that child on the banks of a rivulet. He stoops, gathers a stone, and throws it into the water believing thus to stop the stream, but the water pursues its course and goes on to the sea, bearing its tiny tribute. Thus it is with the wicked. He sees

generations succeeding each other and going on toward God; the wicked man gets up, and throws his stone, that is, his blasphemy, believing to turn them back, but they only pursue their road with greater ardour and affection, to carry their homage to Jesus. And this is what we will do. We will go to Jesus, we will embrace Jesus, and we will pray to Jesus to touch the hearts of the wicked.

And why should they take Jesus from us? Is it, perhaps, for God's sake? or for the sake of humanity? Do they pretend that it is for God's sake? But if God has no son, He is no longer a Father! Therefore, of a God who consoles us, of a God who heals us, they would make a God who has never consoled grief, a God who has never dried a tear, a God cold and selfish as themselves. They forget that God is not only *Power*, but He is *Love*—infinite Love—and no one proves it to us more forcibly than Jesus. Do they pretend to disbelieve this for the sake of humanity? But has not humanity always desired of heaven a *God-man*? For a God who is not a man could not satisfy us, because a man who is not God could not save us. We need then the God-man and Man-God. If, indeed, they take away Jesus, what creed have they to present to humanity? What to offer to the poor or to the rich? Who

would they raise above the heads of Judges, of Kings, of the rulers of the people? Who would they place near the unhappy ones of the earth? Who will come to console their weeping, to dry their tears? Upon what breast will they repose their aching hearts, if Jesus be not there? O, miserable ones! If they take away God, they are guilty towards themselves; but let them not sin against their brethren and against the suffering! Let them at least have compassion on their misery and desolation. They would that a mother should no longer bring her child to church and show her Jesus, to arm her against the seductions of the world. Then, neither the mother nor the wife could any longer come to weep at the feet of Jesus, to implore of Him the strength they need to bear with resignation all they suffer. No longer would the dying be able to receive Jesus for their consolation at the hour of death. Christ would no longer be in the hands of the people; Christ who is the support, the consolation, the comfort of all, Christ who is all for the people and who is their only true friend. But let them tremble; let them dread lest the people turn into a sword the cross that they would break in their hands! For what will the people do in their misery when Christ is no longer there, their only comfort and support? Those who would rob the world of

Christ, let them first take away its hunger, its sufferings, its toil, and above all its weapons, for if the faith of Christ should disappear from the world, nothing will remain for us but to cover our faces with our hands, and so await a terrible punishment. A great catastrophe, a frightful destruction will ensue, and the country, that country they pretend to love (while they only love themselves), this poor country, crowned with thorns and lacerated by griefs, will be constrained to mount to its Calvary, there to perish miserably, while insulted from without, and whence it will assuredly hurl down curses, unmingled with any voice of pardon, on its murderers and executioners.

For the real executioners of our country are those who would rob her of Jesus!

XIX.

THE DOCTRINE OF JESUS CHRIST.

Exordium.—What is it which bestows on man that regal badge of which the Psalmist speaks with such grateful and religious emotion ?

“ *Gloriæ et honore coronasti eam Domine.*” O, Lord, hast Thou indeed crowned Thy creature with honour and glory ? Not certainly with external splendour, for what are we in comparison to those worlds of dazzling light which fill space with their beams as they revolve over our heads ? What is it, then ? It is not the strength of our limbs ; for who could measure them with those of the kings of the forest and the desert who are so mighty and so swift ? Nor is it through the tranquillity of our existence, nor its joy, for we come into the world with a cry of pain, and leave it with a groan which saddens those who see us die ; and between the two extremes of our life’s journey, the cradle and the tomb, man passes on, dragging a heavy chain of disappointments, cares, and griefs, and sorrows.

No ! it is our soul which distinguishes us and

forms our regal badge ; our spirit says : *I think, I love, I will* ; and the material universe is nothing in comparison to these prerogatives of our spirit, which gives an incontestable sovereignty to our being.

And what does our soul call for in its most inspired moments and its most ardent aspirations ? God ! God ! He is the supreme desire of our soul. To know God : this is the constant desire of our minds, because in this knowledge we find the elements of that love which gives life to our hearts and manifestations of goodness whereby to sanctify our wills. And without this knowledge the intellect is perverted and the will becomes ungovernable.

And here we have a standing-point which all orthodox doctrine acknowledges, and another no less incontestable, which is that we cannot know God well unless through the life and mysteries of Christ, since the knowledge of the one cannot be separated from the knowledge of the other.

Let us, therefore, continue our study and fix our eyes upon Jesus Christ and His adorable person ; consider His moral side and His virtues and see what doctrines He taught to men. This, my brethren, will save us from all sophisms.

Brethren, before the coming of Jesus Christ

man had fallen into a fearful state of moral corruption, and from the depths in which he lay, raised his eyes to Heaven, imploring a guide, a doctor, a master. Heaven, moved with compassion, sent down this guide, this doctor, this master in Jesus Christ.

And what did He do? He did not begin by discussing the axioms of belief, or by erecting a systematic code of laws; He began by saying: "Do as I do, imitate Me."

He did not begin as most schoolmasters, by surrounding Himself with scholars, and attracting them by the fascination of words. He worked before teaching. He would that His doctrines should be manifested rather by works than by words, and that they should form history rather than theory. And this is what explains the silence of the first thirty years of His hidden life.

He could afford to be silent because His virtues spoke so loudly. See Him in the house of Joseph and Mary; it is no longer the hovel of Bethlehem, but it is equally poor. What treasures and spiritual riches are hidden in the house of the poor artisan! How beautiful to see Jesus modestly pursuing so poor a trade! How lovely He was in that house in Nazareth, practising the virtues of poverty, labour, and obedience.

Poverty, labour, and obedience! That God

should become man and descend to our nothingness we might possibly conceive, when we reflect upon His love toward us, His infinite and omnipotent love. But why, being God, did He not appear upon earth surrounded with power, honour and riches? Why did He choose poverty and give an example of diligence and submission? Why? Because man needed such an example. Man needed a God of poverty. He had abused the value of riches and had become so depraved that not knowing where to place the principle of true greatness, he placed it in things external and material. Riches being an efficacious means of procuring pleasures here below, they exercised an absolute power over men, who believed their possession necessary to happiness, and had forgotten that the real and true value of man is measured by moral energy and courage to struggle against the ills of life.

And this it was Jesus came to prove by being born in poverty. He could have been born in a more elevated position, He could have collected around Him the elements of an indestructible felicity; but, no, He chose to be born of a poor woman, and to pass His life in a dark workshop, to show how poverty raises us above life, strengthens our character, and prepares us for greater things.

But Jesus Christ united work with poverty, and even in this He had to conquer our vicious inclinations. For after all, work is wearisome in itself. Let economists boast of the utility and beauty of labour; they cannot release it from its attributes of pain, and suffering, and humiliation, which make it unacceptable to most men. And yet what other means have we of carrying out our perfection here below? It is only by labour that we can cultivate our intelligence, overcome external obstacles, and subjugate matter to serve our needs and provide for the necessities of life, so that labour is indispensable. Jesus Christ, in order to make us accept and practise work, worked Himself in the workshop of Nazareth.

Instead of seeking an occupation which would have procured Him the admiration of the world, He placed Himself on the lowest step of the social ladder; He chose as man to ennoble Himself by manual labour, and to eat of bread won through the sweat of His brow.

But this is not all; Humanity needed the example of another and difficult virtue, and this is obedience. Yes, friends, obedience is a difficult virtue, and one which is much lacking in our days.

We everywhere hear independence talked of, and its subversive doctrines are promulgated

everywhere. But in proportion as they are diffused, servility increases. The words of Tacitus : "*Ruere in servilitutum,*" are nowadays fulfilled. Yes, friend, we rush into all kinds of servility, we even forget our personal dignity, when it is a question of interest or gain, and we do it with a facility which astonishes honest men.

We find this servility in all classes of society. In the higher, as in the lower, power and dignities are given to unworthy persons on account of their readiness to encourage evil tendencies; and how rarely do we meet with the honourable acceptance of duties.

But Christ chose to obey: marvellous circumstance! Of the three persons in the Holy Family it is the Highest who obeys. Great were the merits of the Spouse of Mary; but what virtues could compare to hers, and, greater still, those of Her Divine Son? And yet it is Joseph who commands, and Jesus and Mary who obey—Mary who commands and Jesus who obeys. And with what solicitude and tender respect He treats both His mother and Joseph. We should ponder these things in our heart.

So that, resignation in poverty, love of work for the supply of our needs, submission to authority in the matter of those rules which are based on sentiments of duty—these are the three great

virtues by which Christ's life, from its commencement, commends itself to our admiration.

But it is in the exercise of His Apostolate that Jesus Christ may best be known, because here His sphere of action is larger. The hour has sounded, Jesus presents Himself to the world, let us mingle with the crowds which follow His footsteps. At first sight He seems a man like other men. But what a holy calm surrounds Him ! He bears impressed upon His person an image of grace and superhuman dignity which carries us away, a sublimity, a grandeur, a power, and a genius which reveal in Him more of the angel than the man. His features denote the touching gentleness and resignation of the victim that immolates Himself, which we notice in the paintings of Raphael, who, a deep theologian like Dante, did not, like Murrillo and Correggio, depict all his angels smiling and crowned with roses.

The innocence of His manners and way of life surpasses all the splendours of Heaven ; in Him we recognize the Lamb without spot, pure and holy like the Tabernacle of the Most High, the image of supremest beauty.

Therefore is it that the heresies which denied Christ's Divinity came after those which denied His humanity. It would seem as though it ought to be the contrary, and that when men sought to

understand the nature of Jesus, they should begin by doubting His Divinity. But no, they began by doubting if under such a type human nature could have existed. Some affirmed that His body was a cloud, others a celestial substance; and all agreed in concluding that it was made of different matter to ours, so great was the astonishment produced in His contemporaries, so firmly were they persuaded that a perfect virtue cannot be the portion of man.

In our day men try to lower Jesus to our level, and to say that He was a great man, a great philosopher, a great philanthropist. But the heroism of His holiness protests against such a blasphemy. For what does His character possess in common with that of these great men? We know that great geniuses, great conquerors, and great philanthropists are but too frequently men of vicious lives—they have more intelligence than their fellow-men, and have distinguished themselves by its means. But none of them can compare to Christ. Examine their actions, their virtues, their holiness, and tell me if there be one among them who has never sinned. All have some failing, some weakness, some defect. Socrates was great in his death; but was he always pure in his life? Therefore, to establish a parallel between the son of Sophroniscus and the Son of Mary, to

compare the vulgar virtues of the one with the sanctity of the life of the other, would be an insult to Jesus Christ. He alone could say to His enemies : “ Which of you convinceth me of sin ? ”

Ah ! friends, the earth had never seen such a combination of beauty and moral perfection. Who can enumerate all the virtues which shone forth in that Divine model ? Read the Gospel and you will be convinced. Read that history for yourselves ; and you will taste in a manner ever new its inexpressible delights. If any perfection seems wanting or concealed, read on, and you come upon it in such magnificent and splendid guise as will astonish you. Give wings to your spirit, imagine all that you can of majesty, sweetness, sublimity, mercy, awfulness and justice, all that forms our idea of the perfections to be found in God, and tell me if it be not also the character of Jesus.

All panegyrical effort fails in describing the virtue of His life. Men may try in vain to falsify the character of our Jesus. He is not the romantic Jesus, created by the more or less vivid fancy of the novelist ; our Jesus is the real Jesus, the Jesus of the Gospel, and His character, in spite of His incomparable perfections, is true and natural.

The Divine nature is manifested in Him ;

through the absence of every defect, His human nature in all the verity of its legitimate emotions. See His charity, see His love for Him He calls His Father—what zeal for His glory, what love for humanity which He consoles, guides, and governs.

Never has man thus loved other men. He is insensible to none of their misfortunes, He has tears for all the afflicted, succour for all the necessitous—there is not a single moment in His life in which He is not doing good.

Follow Him in His distant journeys, it is always the same; even in His miracles, His goodness rather than His power is apparent.

The sound of His voice produces prodigies and miracles, and even the contact of His garments. See how each act of His life is one of exquisite bounty. He is besieged on all sides, the crowd invoke His benefits and favours, and press around Him; and He, far from showing Himself wearied by their importunity, is ever ready and equal. He treats all men equally, but the poor and men of low degree are the special objects of His predilection. He raises them, encourages them, but He avoids deluding them with illusory promises. He sacrifices Himself for them, but seeks no vain popularity.

He loves His disciples and bears with their

coarseness and their ignorance. One of them betrays Him, and He continues to love him ; another denies Him, and He turns upon him a look which pierces his heart. He loves His country, and on the way to Calvary forgets His own sufferings and grieves in reflecting on the troubles which await it. He loves sinners, and not only receives them, but seeks them and brings them to His table. An immense and unlimited compassion fills His heart. To sinners hardened in crime He relates the parable of the Prodigal Son, and of the Good Shepherd.

Two of His disciples entreat Him to call down fire from Heaven upon two cities which had refused to receive Him, and He replies, "I am come to save men, not to destroy them." The Pharisees tried to induce Him to pronounce sentence of death on the adulterous woman, and He replies, "Let him among you who is without sin cast the first stone at her."

And when they left Him alone with her, immensity of mercy confronted with immensity of misery, He asks : "Woman, who are thy accusers ?" And she answers, "No man, Lord." And He, "Neither do I accuse thee ; go and sin no more." What a picture, brethren ! They accuse Him of being too great a friend of sinners, but believe me, brethren, no ordinary

virtue is sufficient to merit such a reproof, nor any purely human virtue; it must be the virtue of God.

He is never occupied with Himself, but only with the salvation of others. He leaves the ninety-nine sheep to go in search of the lost one, and to fold it in His arms. And in the exercise of Charity, does He not attain to the highest perfection? And what shall we say about His modesty and humility? In a moment of enthusiasm, the people would make Him a King, and He conceals Himself. He works miracles, but recommends silence.

He exercises a complete empire over Himself. He is ever master of His acts and words.

His tastes are simple; the birds have their nests, the wolves their dens, but the Son of Man has not where to lay His head, but He submits in all to the will of His Father.

And what shall we say about the purity of His conduct? He is surrounded by enemies, and throws them down a challenge, "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" And no one rises in reply.

But it is in His Passion that we must especially contemplate Jesus Christ in order to understand the greatness of His mind.

It was not the first time that the world had

seen virtue fighting against iniquity, but nothing to compare with the dignity of Christ before His judges and His executioners. Let them interrogate Him, the Holiest of the Holy. He is always at the same level of grandeur confronting calumny by silence, only speaking to render testimony to the truth, or when appealed to in the name of His Father.

After receiving what Corneille calls the greatest injury a man can receive to his honour, a blow on the face, He only asks if He has spoken ill? He is dragged from tribunal to tribunal, His innocence is everywhere acknowledged, but nowhere efficaciously proclaimed. They would get rid of Him, and even in the presence of those stupid men, so unworthy of the authority they possessed, and before their insult, He complains not and holds His peace.

Behold Him at length in the hands of His enemies, behold Him on the Cross. His own have fled from Him; below Him are only John and Mary, and the sight of His weeping mother increases His anguish. Everywhere else His eyes encounter only enemies; the people so beloved by Him have demanded His death with one accord, only blasphemies reach His ears, and He who had shown such compassion to others now finds none on any side, and after having suffered indescrib-

able tortures and unspeakable sufferings, dies covered with opprobrium.

But before dying, He lifts His eyes to Heaven, and asks for pardon for His murderers.

Now I ask you, brethren, if mere human nature could suffice for such a life and such a death? Do you not find in His life and death something surpassing human nature? Is it not something incomparable and incomprehensible? And in the presence of these facts we have but one choice, either to shut our eyes and not to see or to adore. After having thus given us an example of all virtue, Jesus *teaches* us.

My friends, I cannot here pretend to expound the doctrine of Jesus Christ; the Church does this continuously, as anyone who values the teaching of the Church will understand. How many books were written before Jesus on the great interests of humanity? How many schools opened to teach us wisdom? How many researches have been made with regard to the nature of man, of his origin, of his rights and duties? But at the same time, with what uncertainty, contradictions, and delusions? There was at one time such gross darkness that men despaired of again seeing the light of day.

It was just then that Christ was born—born among a people despised for its indifference to philosophy and to the fine arts. He was educated

at Nazareth, a city despised for the ignorance of its inhabitants; a poor carpenter is His only teacher, and His school a poor workshop. Jesus Himself was a poor working man, who issued while yet young from that workshop to found an empire of unknown name, of unheard of power—an empire about which men knew nothing—the empire of light, of truth, of intellect, and love, an immense, an indestructible empire.

And where will Jesus hold His schools?

Rome and Athens held theirs in academies, lyceums, and porticos. Jesus Christ holds His by the road-side, by the sea-shore, and on the top of mountains.

Who are His disciples? The philosophers had their *adepts*, their “initiated.” Jesus Christ, instead, turns to all and says to all: “Come to Me.” His school is everywhere and His disciples everywhere.

And what is His method? Does it depend on Science? Does it indulge in irony like Socrates? Does it borrow the magic and fascination of Plato’s words and style?

Does it call to its aid the art of dialectics, or the incantations of poetic imagination? No! these are means which the masters and founders of the philosophical schools make use of, not those used by Christ.

Man teaches by analysis, by inductions; He makes use of dialectics and of all the means with which Divine Providence has provided us for knowing the truth and for imparting it to others; but it was not thus that Divine teaching was to be manifested—humanity could not arrive at a knowledge of its destinies by means of vain, lengthy, and subtle discussions.

There is a physiological law which embraces and sums up all the rest, and this is the law of motion.

We are destined to movement, we are in the world in order to progress toward our end. This progressive movement of ours would be nullified if we lost, in disputing and reasoning, the time which ought to be occupied in action. And would the majority understand abstract demonstration?

But this is not the method of Jesus. He addresses Himself to the faith of the people, and however slightly you may be acquainted with the Gospel, you must have observed that He rarely indulges in discussion, contenting Himself with assertions, and never with unreasonable assertions, but such as rest upon simple and peremptory foundation. He shows them a man blind from his birth, whom they had seen and known, and says to them, "He now sees, because I

willed he should see." Another man had lain three days in the grave ; they knew it, for they had mourned his death. "He now returns to life, because I *willed* it," saith Jesus. Here we see an instance of the human preliminary of faith. After this, discussion is useless ; men believe, because they see the results. Thus, from the lips of Jesus, these simple and pregnant assertions were continually falling.

Christ's method was the practice of things incredible, whose verity enhanced their importance, for "Verily, verily," saith Jesus, "I tell you the truth."

And ought not the God-man to have made use of this means to govern and lead His poor creatures ?

And what shall we say about the truth of His doctrine ?

His word and His doctrine have been now exposed for nineteen centuries to every kind of examination, and submitted to all the rigors of criticism.

No words have ever been so much examined or discussed, sifted and subjected to all manner of criticism, but no shadow of error has been found in them, no single fact has been disproved, circumstance unique in the history of humanity.

But Christ's word is not only true, it is also complete.

It answers all the questions concerning man's earthly existence. It is and will ever be the answer to all religious and moral questions, present and future ; it throws light on the origin of things.

Who better than Christ has spoken to us of God ?

Who better than Jesus has made known to us His essence ?

He explains it with a simplicity and an elevation which should suffice to demonstrate its origin.

The Word of Jesus enlightens us also concerning our own nature.

It is through the abuse of liberty that evil entered the world. The laws of expiation and the mysteries that refer to it lead us back to good.

And with regard to the relations of man toward man, a single word of Christ's was sufficient to change the face of society and to form the basis of that civilization which is our glory.

And what is this sublime Word? It is "*Charity*"—charity, the one great law which embraces all the others, raises us to God above,

and renders us capable of the noblest sacrifices. Under the Empire of Charity the whole aspect of humanity is changed. Authority is no longer the supremacy of brutal force, but the representation of Divine Providence. Obedience is no longer a servile debt, but an act of homage to Him who is the principle of Order. Paternity is no longer tyrannical; woman regains her rights; the child finds in parental love sufficient protection for the development of its life; riches understands its mission, and begins by succouring the poor; poverty is no longer hopeless and abandoned. Good and evil are unequally divided in the world, but charity fills the voids, and answers those questions which all the strength of man's intellect vainly endeavours to solve. Compare the Ancient Rule with the New Rule, and you will understand how many benefits Christ has rendered to Society. There is no single ordinance of the Ancient Rule regarding the welfare of man or of the family which has not been changed through the medium of Christ, and this work is still unfinished.

But the work of Jesus on earth is not everything. He has opened out to us hopes beyond the grave, rewards to those who follow the paths of virtue, and punishments for those who obstinately persist, and die—in evil courses.

Can there be a more beautiful, purer, or more elevating or reasonable idea than that of the Christian belief in the future world? The doctrine of Christ answers all our necessities, both temporal and eternal; it teaches us our nature, our origin, our end, and our destiny. It is true that it has its mysteries. But can any doctrine speak of God without mysteries? Is not God the most incomprehensible of all beings?

And we do wrong to give the name of mysteries to the myths and enigmas of the pagan priesthood, which were mysteries only to the people and not to the initiated; the Christian doctrine alone has mysteries for all. O, admirable doctrine! which, wherever it be carried on the wings of preachers, brings a perfect morality and civilization. O, admirable doctrine! nineteen centuries of study have been unable to add or take away aught from thee. O, admirable doctrine! nineteen centuries of application have not exhausted thy faculties and powers. O, admirable doctrine! after nineteen centuries of teaching, thou carriest still fresh light and renovation into the bosom of humanity.

O, admirable doctrine! Yea, this doctrine comes from Jesus Christ, because Jesus Christ is God.

Peroration.—Brethren, a celebrated German

rationalist says, "Christianity, regarded in the light of philosophy, is rather a fact than a conception of the intellect, and Jesus Christ is the centre of this fact."

I also say to you that Jesus Christ is a fact; no one can deny it, without denying history, but the greatest fact of all is the doctrine of Jesus and the sanctity of Jesus.

These are facts which no one can deny or explain without acknowledging that Christ is God.

"The life and the death of Jesus," says Rousseau, "are the life and the death of a God."

But what does modern science think?

My brethren, concerning Jesus, we cannot remain indifferent, we must take a side; there are only two to take, we must either adore or curse Him.

The story of the nineteen past centuries may be summed up in two words. Jesus has been blessed, and He has been cursed. He has been loved, and He has been hated. Jesus has been adored, and blasphemed. But I will not here relate the story of the strife between this love and hatred of Jesus, I only wish to tell you what has been done, thought, and said by historic science and criticism.

What has Science done for Jesus? In the first place it has derided Him. Yes, Voltaire derided

Jesus in his words and in his writings ; he derided Him with that sarcastic smile upon his lips which we perceive in the portraits which remain of him, so that we associate his face with that satanic sneer, with that laugh of hatred against Christ ! But sometimes he left sneering, and his hatred assumed another form. “ Let us crush the Infamous One ! ” he cried ; but we know and we shudder at the recollection of the terrible consequences which followed as chastisement of this awful blasphemy.

And how did Science come forth from it ? It came forth warned, if not converted. Science understands that it must no longer mock at Jesus—that men must think seriously, and treat seriously of Jesus ; that the people will not lightly permit their Faith to be torn from them.

And what then has Science done ?

It has changed its tactics. It has denied *a priori* the supernatural in the life of Jesus, disregarding all the men of genius who have defended its doctrines ; disregarding the Holy Scriptures which have celebrated it for nineteen centuries ; disregarding the Saints, the Martyrs, the Confessors, and the Virgins who sealed it with their virtues and their blood ; disregarding, in fact, all those monuments raised upon earth which proclaim Him God.

Science pronounces its oracular verdict. Jesus Christ embraced in Himself all that is best in humanity: "He is a genius so great that no man hath ever surpassed Him, nor ever will surpass Him." Thus much for Science.

We do not complain of Science—we are even grateful to it—for we deduct from its assertions that if in Jesus Christ is contained all that is best in human nature; if Jesus Christ is a sublime genius; if His virtue was not, nor shall be, surpassed, we may conclude in the first place that He is not a *madman* or a fool. This word makes you shudder, brethren, and it burns my lips to say it, but it is useful to repeat it and to say Jesus Christ is not a *fool*, because by the very confession of Science He is declared to be a sublime *genius*.

In the second place, He is not an *impostor*, for His virtue has never been surpassed, as Science has borne testimony in an admirable manner. If, then, Jesus Christ was not an impostor, He believed what He said, and was convinced and persuaded of what He affirmed.

He said He *was God*, and this is history. He said it before all the people and before the Jews, and He died for saying it. Therefore, He believed Himself to be God, and since, according to the testimony of Science, we ought to believe that He was sincere and not an *impostor*, we ought to

believe that *if He believed to be God, He was God*. For a man would certainly be mad to call himself God and sustain such an assertion through atrocious torments even to death.

But Jesus Christ was not mad. Science abundantly proves it; therefore, Christ was what He believed to be. Jesus Christ was God. Thus Science, in its anxiety to deny the divinity of Jesus, supplies us with an irresistible argument in its favour as conclusive as a mathematical syllogism. Who would have thought that modern science would have afforded us such a stringent proof to speak to the heart and mind of all?

How true it is that God alone is great, and that men are like as grains of sand carried about at His will.

O, learned men, continue your researches, continue your discoveries, we will bless and not curse you; search the heavens and interrogate the earth, you have taught us not to fear you, your progress only confirms our belief.

And what are we to conclude from this?

When you find yourself before one of these men who say, Christ was a great man, a great philanthropist, you should answer: You say either too much or too little. If Jesus Christ is not God, He is a madman or an impostor. Would you call Him a madman? But it would be the same as

saying that a madman may appear the wisest of men, that He can teach knowledge, that He can establish a Kingdom of wisdom, that a madman can become the Lord of the world and the King of Kings. And then not only Jesus Christ would be mad, but His disciples and the Gentiles would be mad, the Pharisees would be mad, and the Jews and the Martyrs and the Saints and the Doctors and the Fine Arts and Science, in short all the world. Will you say He was an impostor? But that is the same as saying that imposture can inspire and sustain virtue. Your human reason should teach you that He is God. Behold before His throne Human reason, Science and the Fine Arts on one side, and on the other the sixty generations which have succeeded each other in the nineteenth century of Christianity, and the two great doctors of the Church, S. Augustine and S. Thomas Aquinas. "Jesus Christ asserted Himself to be God," says S. Augustine, "therefore He is God."

Here I stop and conclude with the record of three great duties —

The first is that we should remain firm before the negations of science, the calumny of reviews and journals, ever confirming ourselves in the faith of Jesus Christ.

Secondly, that we should be proud of our faith,

not with the pride which comes of haughtiness, but with that pride which comes of gratitude to God. Yes, brethren, let us pray the God of Science, Truth and Holiness that He may enlighten our minds, unite all our hearts, cause prejudice to cease, that we may admire true science ; let us pray God to cast out egotism from our hearts and to unite us all in the same bond of charity.

Yes, brethren, let us pray God that all creatures may bow down and adore the Son of God.

O, Jesus, reign in all our minds by Thy perfect wisdom.

O, Jesus, reign in all our hearts by Thy perfect virtue.

O, Jesus Christ, Incarnate Word, shed upon all men Thy glorious rays. We need fresh virtue from Thee to save and unite the world.

O, Jesus Christ, let Thy voice become the sole voice of the world, that the desire of Saint Jerome may be realized.

O, my Jesus, hear this my prayer which I make with all the strength of my mind, unite us all in the truth and in the perfection of goodness, that we may form but one people whom Thou shalt one day conduct to Thine eternal joys.

XX.

PURGATORY.

Exordium.—My friends, when I visit the holy resting-places of the dead I feel both saddened and consoled. What a spectacle for profound commiseration! A feeling of melancholy invades my heart while perusing the names on the tombstones, yet not wholly unmingled with comfort as I mark the last words of those funereal inscriptions, telling us that the dead died in the Lord and asking us to pray for them. Down there, in those dark vaults, how all human pride and human vanity disappear! How the sources of genius, beauty, and power crumble to dust and vanish in nothingness!

But Religion comes and opens the Heavens of Hope! Without the Christian's hope how gloomy would it all appear, what a mass of corruption! But God with sweet and wonderful words revives our love and our hopes. "Rise up," He says, "rise up," for out of these remains shall spring a new life, beyond the confines of Time; thou shalt find a new Heaven and a new Earth where thou shalt

abide, and where, in the rays of a sun which never sets, thou shalt live in peace and without suffering from the ravages of Time.

Whence cometh, O, my friends, this sweet voice, which penetrates our inmost heart and sheds such sweet balm on our wounds? From thee, O, Religion of Jesus. Thou standest majestically over the tomb, as a mother over the cradle of her sleeping child, and before the trophies of death remindest us of the promised life, and amid the monuments of grief dost address us in the language of love. Hail to thee, O, queen of life and death; I bow before thee, and feel in my heart the sweet hope of living some day a better and a happier life with those whom I have loved and mourned.

Yes, brethren, Religion illuminates the dark horrors of the sepulchre; Religion places as guardian near the tomb, Hope crowned with olive. It is Religion which, on the sadly-draped altar, on the funeral pall of a father or a mother, maintains a loving connection between the living and the dead by showing us prayer as stronger than death. She, our common mother, hears the groans of those on earth and of those not yet arrived in glory, and holds out one hand to relieve those and the other to relieve these, nor stays until she has accomplished her work.

Therefore it is in her name that I would speak

to you of the dead this day, that both you and they may be alike consoled by your suffrage. Hear me, I entreat you, my brethren, with tenderness as well as attention, for it is not only of *her* dear ones that Religion would speak to you, but of *yours* also. O, Jesus, it is of Thy spouse that I would speak, and also of Thee. Bless my words, and endow them with light, and strength, and unction. Cause them to induce in us a true, and lively, and open-handed charity to console, deliver, and save us.

Brethren, in what does Purgatory consist? In the plan of Religion there is no better-studied doctrine, and in the order of reason no truth more satisfactory to the mind or more consoling to the heart. The doctrine of Purgatory has on its side all tradition and every authority, the poets and philosophers of pagan antiquity, just men, prophets and doctors, mythology, the gospel and history, painting, the monuments of architecture and sculpture up to the time of Luther; not to speak of Plato, who in his *Gorgias* speaks of a future existence in which men may expiate, through suffering, a guilty life; not to speak of Virgil, who shows us how souls are constrained to purify themselves before entering the Elysian Fields. Everywhere we find traces of expiatory

rites, and engraved in the heart of man and in the customs of every people a living expression of the belief that there must be a place where the dead go to be purified before ascending to Paradise. Let us open the Bible, and what find we there? That the custom of praying for the dead dates from the earliest ages, which custom is connected with the idea of Purgatory, because we do not pray for the saints nor for the damned. Does not the Bible tell us of offerings on tombs and sacrifices for the dead? Tobias exhorts his son to place bread and wine on the tomb of the just. And those men who fasted for seven days at the death of Saul! Further on, we listen to the songs of David which celebrate the joys of souls who have passed through tribulation to a better life. Isaiah affirms that God will purify the stains of man. And, finally, when Judaic civilization was in its decline, we see Judas Maccabeas, who after a battle with the idolaters not only commands the dead to be buried honourably, but orders a collection and sends to Jerusalem 12,000 drams of silver for the offering of a sacrifice to God in their honour. When Christ came He had no need to prove this doctrine, as He proved that of His divinity and His resurrection. He merely records it by saying: "Take heed while ye have life to conform to the laws of God, lest

ye fall into the hands of the Judge, and the Judge deliver thee into the hands of the Executioner, and the Executioner throw thee into that prison from whence thou shalt not escape till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing." What prison is this? "It is not Heaven," says S. Jerome, "Heaven, the country of liberty; nor is it Hell, that prison from which no soul escapes; but the intermediate place between Heaven and Hell, which is Purgatory." The Gospel says, again: He that blasphemeth against the Holy Spirit is guilty of a sin "which shall not be remitted to him neither in this world nor in the world to come." And S. Bernard says: "Are there, then, sins which can be remitted in the world to come?" And where? Not in Heaven, for there no creature enters who is not pure from every stain; nor in Hell, where is written in characters of fire, "*Nulla est redemptio*"—"Here is no redemption." Therefore in an intermediate place—in Purgatory.

The Apostles taught the doctrine of Purgatory. S. Paul speaks of Purgatory when he says that "at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, whether in Heaven, or in Earth, or beneath the Earth." Also in his letter to Timothy, where he says, "Pray for the dead, in order that you may find favour with God." S. Cyril, S. Cyprian, S. Augustine, S. Jerome, S. John, S. Chrysostom, S.

Ambrose of Milan, S. Gregory speak of prayers made for the dead, and exhort the faithful to remember them. It is not enough to shed tears and scatter flowers upon our tombs, but also the balsam of good works ; for as water extinguishes fire, so good works extinguish sins. If we examine the Greek and Syrian liturgies we find the formula of prayers for the dead. The "*Memento*" was not then sung by the priest himself, but by all the people, to whom the deacon turned, pronouncing the words, "For them who sleep in Jesus."

And if we inquire of the monuments of antiquity, do not the inscriptions in the catacombs remind us of Purgatory ? Their pictures represent the flames which purify souls. By the hand of the artist, marble and stone are transformed to portray scenes of pain and suffering which the artist has not seen, but which his faith enables him to imagine. Poets also have sung of these sanctifying pains, and Dante has not given tongue to the belief of his country alone, but to that of all ages before his time.

Brethren, belief in Purgatory was the hope of human nature till the time of Luther. Three centuries ago a man rose up for the first time against this doctrine, and preached against prayers

and sacrifices for the dead. This man was called *Luther*. And who was *Luther*? A libertine and an apostate monk. Whence did he come? From a monastery, where for twenty years he had lived on the alms offered for the dead. What had he discovered against this doctrine? Nothing, absolutely nothing! He denied Purgatory in consequence of his own theories. "We are all saints," he said. But this was too ridiculous to be maintained. Even the Protestants admit of Purgatory, only they do not agree about the definition of the dogma. The Protestant Haase wrote, "Those who die are too good to go to Hell, but are too bad to go at once to Paradise;" therefore there must be a place where souls are purified to merit eternal glory. De Maistre observes: "Protestants will have Purgatory, for they retain that there must be a place where souls become purified." What is this place if not the Catholic's Purgatory? And how can we fail to admit Purgatory? Our heart and our reason both require it. Reason says, "If God exist, Purgatory must also exist; if there is no Purgatory, there can be no God." This may appear startling, but listen to me. If God exists, He exists as a just God, because if He were not just He would not be God. Now, to be just He must give to each one what he merits. True justice

requires it. If we then admit of reward and punishment, we must also admit of a Paradise and a Hell. It is impossible that the justice of God should leave crimes unpunished and virtues unrewarded; therefore Heaven and Hell exist. "But," you say, "why must we admit of an intermediate place, such as Purgatory?" Brethren, do you believe that the supreme destiny of the good after the present life is the enjoyment of God through union with Him? Do you believe that God is perfect justice, perfect sanctity, the enemy of all imperfection and of all sin? Do you believe that there are some men who die adorned with the holiest virtues and free from those defects which are the result of our frailty? Yes! Then the soul is made for union with God. But God is perfect purity; therefore the soul must be perfectly pure. It must be purified. As it rarely occurs that a soul issues really pure from this world, there must be a means for its purification. And Purgatory is this means. We believe that in the next life the good will enjoy Paradise and the wicked will be punished in Hell, and the justice of God would be sufficiently explained by these absolute states of reward and punishment if men died all absolutely good or absolutely wicked. There would be no need of the intermediate state we call Purgatory if there

were not these intermediate conditions in the conduct of men.

Do men all die either perfectly innocent or perfectly guilty? We know they do not. Was your mother, who died so lately, pure as an angel, or wicked as a fallen angel? You would not dare to say either one or the other; "She was not quite good, nor was she bad," you would answer. "My mother was good and pious, but —" and in this "but" we find the necessity for Purgatory. With the imperfections which you admit, shall she have winged her flight direct to Heaven, or shall she have been condemned to Hell? Do you not feel the force of this argument?

Therefore, there must be a place where venal and limited sins receive a proportionally light and limited chastisement conducive to expiation, so that even without the teaching of our faith, reason itself would suggest Purgatory. And what does the heart say? It needs Purgatory for the consolation of the living as for that of the dead, for without this supplicatory expiation, who could hope to get to Heaven and complete his salvation? It would be a vain presumption, and he would be rash who in saying, "I hope to be saved," means to say "I am so good and so holy, that if I were to die at this moment I should go straight to Paradise." Such words, even in

the mouth of a saint, would they not show an insensate presumption? And who would have courage to make an act of hope? Without Purgatory there is no middle path between presumption and despair. And, indeed, what hope can a sinner have who, hardened in crime, is subject to the immense difficulty of repenting in this life and the impossibility of purifying himself in another? And for the sick man who would return to God at the last moment of his life, what consolation! And now, brethren, without Purgatory, can we assure ourselves of the fate of those who die under our eyes? However good be the conceit in which we hold our father and our mother, or our friend, we cannot be blind to their share of the defects inherent to the children of men. And, therefore, what comfort could our anxious hearts receive on their account? The corpse of your mother or of your wife lies before you. This woman whom you have so much loved, and whom you still love—say. Is she saved or lost? Terrible question! “I know not,” you reply. Still more terrible answer! You try to prove that she is safe and in Heaven, but you cannot do so, because there is no human being entirely free from all defects. In this oppressive situation, what Protestant can encourage you? Our religion alone can do it. She repeats her last prayer over the

corpse of your dear one, and says to you, her children, "Your mother's soul may be damned if she died persisting in sin, but if she repented, even should it have been only at the last moment of her life, she is safe, for she is now expiating her faults and preparing for Heaven." And is not this consoling? Tell me, ye who have lost a beloved one! Therefore, Purgatory exists. How much terrible sorrow has been mitigated by this reflection! To how many souls sunk in the depths of despair has it not brought a ray of hope and comfort? If the soul has not died in sin, if it be not absolutely lost, if we are persuaded that it was converted as it breathed its last, we know that it has the means of expiating its faults, and that it is sure to go sooner or later to Heaven. O, consoling dogma! I appeal to the heart of all mothers who have lost a son, to that of all sons who have lost their mothers—none will deny the fact. But is it true that we can do aught for those in Purgatory? Cruel, brethren, is the error which denies it, and brutally contradictory to the instincts of nature that she should make of the life beyond the tomb a closed place before whose threshold our prayers are stayed, crying to us "Thou shalt not pass; no, thou shalt not pass." O, barbarous words which wound our hearts like the point of a sword, which transfix

the heart of a person who mourns a friend, kneeling before his tomb.

Luther and Calvin, the leaders of the Reformation, by attacking this devotion, attacked the family, and, robbing it of its bonds of brotherhood, tore away the white banner of the Virgin, broke the Cross, and destroyed the cultus of the tomb. And by so doing they have proved their religion not to be that to which our hearts aspire.

We are all brethren, all children of the same family, and must our fraternal ties be stopped by the tomb, our love for our dear ones checked by the sod or the marble which covers them? We follow with our goodwill and our affection our brethren who leave us for far countries, and may we not pray for those of them who go beyond the grave? The heart protests against this prohibition. Wounded by grief, by the loss of the beloved object, it needs to believe in this cultus; it needs to believe in the efficacy of prayers and good works; it needs to believe that while weeping, its tears help the soul for whom they are shed; it needs, in fact, to believe that one day in the better world it shall meet again with the object of its affection. Thus, if we believe in the heart, we must admit the existence of Purgatory, for, if it did not exist, it would be necessary to invent it for the

consolation of the dead and the living. Observe, my friends, what comfort this belief conveys. Enter that chamber of death: a brother dies, holding the hand of a brother, a son expires on the breast of her who has given him life; all weep because all hope. The dying man says, "Pray for me, I will pray for you, and we shall see each other again in Heaven." The desire of the heart is too powerful for resistance; the Protestants have eradicated the dogma from their minds, but not the belief from their hearts. A young girl, beside the corpse of her mother, replied to the Protestant minister, "Leave me, I must pray for my mother, I must pray for her and for myself." And another, on a like occasion, said, "I must become a Catholic, for I must pray for my dead." It is the heart, friends—the heart which protests. Comfort yourselves, therefore, ye who have lost father or mother, husband or wife, brother or son. Console yourselves ye who have remained behind, and alone, as in a foreign land. No, no; death has not severed the links of affection which united you to your dear ones. They still love you and continually give you proof of it. We see flowers upon tombs, we see faces bathed in tears, we see funeral pomps, we hear elegies, we read inscriptions upon costly monuments.

But not in these, brethren, consists our love for the dead. The flowers fade, the tears are dried, the elegies are forgotten, the inscriptions become illegible; love for the dead consists in prayer, yes, in prayer. "Pray for me," said S. Monica to her sons, Augustine and Elodius, "when you ascend the altar, pray God for me." She told him to pray, and S. Augustine prayed as he relates in his sublime book of *The Confessions*. But, alas, we too easily forget our dead. While we hold in ours the hand of him who is about to leave us, when with semi-spent voice, casting around him a last glance of affection, he asks us, "Wilt thou forget me?" we answer, "Forget thee—forget thee? it would be impossible!" But O! poor heart of man, how everything vanishes; while the blow which has carried away our dear one still vibrates in our heart, while the heart still bleeds, the dear image of the dead remains with us; but time passes, distractions intervene, and a mist arises between us and our lost ones. We see them, but afar, and as through a cloudy veil, and often while the flowers are still fresh upon the tomb, before the year has gone its round, we have already formed a fresh existence from which we have excluded our dead; they have departed from our thoughts as they departed from our lives. But, brethren, this forgetfulness

is cruel, inhuman, for our dead suffer. And what do they suffer? Bear with me and I will tell you. Brethren, I repeat that it is inhuman to forget the poor dead, for they suffer. What is it they suffer? S. Augustine, and with him all the Fathers of the Church, say that all we suffer, and are capable of suffering in this life, is nothing in comparison with what is suffered in Purgatory. S. Cyril says that the worst that men suffer in this world would be an alleviation to the souls condemned to the pains of Purgatory. Great God, what sufferings must they be! I have visited the hospitals, I have seen men, women, and children tortured by unspeakable maladies, I have heard their groans and their sighs and been present at their last agonies. I have felt my heart fail me, and have cried, "O, poor humanity, how it suffers!" I have read the acts of the Martyrs, and the narration of their terrible torments invented by the ferocious barbarity and cruelty of their persecutors, and have felt a shudder pass through my frame and tears flow from my eyes. And to think that this is nothing in comparison with that which those poor souls in Purgatory suffer, and that such sufferings would be an alleviation for them! Great God, great God, what sufferings must these be! But let us inquire of tradition. On every side it answers. There is suffering by fire, and, indeed,

S. Paul speaks of the river of fire which souls are obliged to traverse before arriving at salvation. And we hear the voice of the prophet, inviting us to contemplate God seated on that shore, occupied in purifying souls. I hear S. Thomas say, "Lord, if the fire which thou hast given us in Thy mercy is the most terrible of all torments, what will that be which Thou hast created in Thy justice to punish sin?"

But this, says S. Chrysostom, is the most supportable of all their punishments. That which forms the worst trial of that place is the separation from God. Even here, my brethren, if you question your heart and ask it, "Why art thou so sad, O my soul?" it will answer by its groans and its sighs, "I suffer, because I am separated from the person I love, because between me and the object of my love there is a barrier." This is the true suffering of the souls in Purgatory.

Separation. And from whom are they separated? They are separated from the Light that is without shadow; from the Truth which is without error; from the Life without death. They are separated from God. We, my brethren, cannot understand the extent of this suffering, because, immersed as we are in sense and surrounded by the creature, we have only at best a languid and faint idea of God. We are like the

poor child who at a tender age loses its father. Enter that death chamber. His wife is near his pillow, raises his head and wipes his forehead, suffocating her grief, while the babe plays around them and amuses itself. The tender mother looks first at her husband and then at her child; and, approaching the latter, she whispers: "My child, your father is dying." The infant does not understand, and continues its play. All at once the last groan and last sigh is heard, and the poor woman clasps in her arms a corpse. She calls the babe, and says: "Look! my child, thy father is dead!" But the child says: "No, mamma, he is asleep." But the child grows, and his mother often says to him: "You had a father—he was good. Ah! while he lived, we were happy; but when he died we lost all." And the child begins to understand; the smile leaves his rosy cheek, a cloud of sadness gathers on his youthful brow, like that observable on the face of the orphan, and which renders him so interesting; and when he feels hungry, and has not bread to eat, he says: "Ah! if my father were alive, he would give me bread." When he looks at his rags, he says: "If I had my father, he would give me clothes;" and, when he feels despised, he says: "If my father were here, he would have protected me." And thus he feels what it is to

have lost a father. This is the grief of separation. Thus it is with us. Only after death shall we feel what it is to be separated from God—when death has torn the veil through which we behold heavenly things. O! what a change! Then God offers Himself to the soul in all His adorable perfection; the soul sees Him in the splendour of His beauty, His goodness, and His power, invested with the rays of His majesty; he hears the angels sing His praises, he sees the Celestial Court bowing low before Him, and with all the ardour of his charity and all the fervour of his affection he presses forward to join those blessed spirits and to rejoice in His bosom. But God, who sees a stain upon his brow, banishes him from His presence until he shall be cleansed. And then, who can describe the agony of that soul separated from God? We must know God, as that soul knew Him for one moment; we must love Him as that soul loved Him; we must have the same desires in order to know how much it suffers. To have seen God, to love none but God, to have no other desire than that of possessing God, and then to be rejected by Him! What a grievous trial! Absalom, having regained the favour of David, re-enters Jerusalem; but he is not allowed to return to Court. The law, which banishes him from the throne, which prevents

his seeing his father, causes him to exclaim with the accents of profoundest grief: "O, that I might see him—that I might see him! If he still remembers my crime, let him rather take my life—for this is not life—it is worse than death." Thus spake this unnatural son, who so often rebelled against his father. What will not then be the consternation of that soul which, at the moment in which it learns to know God and to feel doubly inflamed with love toward Him, and attracted to Him by irresistible impulses, sees itself rejected by Him! To imagine it, we must picture to ourselves types of the most heart-rending grief which can be known upon earth.

Picture to yourself the wretched exile, the unhappy soul which suffers a thousand times more than you can conceive; the exile from whom has been taken all he held most dear, the sky of his country, the air of his country, the joys of his country—that "country" which has such an inexpressible power over generous hearts, and wrings from unhappy Poland those cries of grief whose echo reaches even to our ears! How heartrending are the groans and sighs of those poor exiles! Think of the mother who has lost her son, of the orphan who has undergone the sorrows of separation at a tender age, and imagine his life of privation. Imagine that of the wretched

prisoner! Remember poor Silvio Pellico in the Piombi of Venice, shut up between four walls, far from men, with no companions but silence and dulness, measuring the hours by his sighs, and counting them as you count the oscillations of the pendulum, without a face to smile upon him, or a hand to press his own! Picture to yourself the poor widow, whose life has been crushed by an incurable grief, who has lost her best support—the object of her love and care. These are the most heart-rending forms of grief with which we are acquainted. But what are these beside those of the souls in Purgatory? What is our country here, so often a prey to dishonour and ruin, compared to that celestial country where all is smiling peace?

What are the fathers of this world compared to the Father we have in Heaven? What are human spouses compared to the Divine Spouse? And then in this world there is always someone to mitigate our sorrows and bring comfort to the broken heart. And when the reality fails, the imagination often supplies its place. But there no illusion is possible.

Again, in this world, when the reality vanishes, we have the power of diverting our minds, taking advantage of our inability to keep them always fixed on the same object. If the right hand be

wanting, we have the left; if both fail we find means to profit by our sufferings and to make a merit of our tears. But in Purgatory it is not so. In Purgatory the souls suffer until God's justice says: "It is enough." Does not this thought disturb us? Does it not impel us to help those souls? The flames are lighted; but you can help to extinguish them; the prison is closed—you can help to burst open the doors! When persons dear to us participate in our sorrows, we are comforted; but when no one shares them, when we bear them alone, they grow gigantic and crush us. All other sorrows are as nothing compared to that. Well, this is precisely the condition of those abandoned souls. Let us enter that house so lately visited by death. The father died a few months since—the mother died yesterday. This is why that poor babe cries and there is none to answer. What will become of that wretched infant? It is suffering from cold and hunger. What will you do at the sight of it? Will you let it die of cold and hunger? Oh, no, you will take it into your arms and clasp it to your breast, and cry: "No, no; I will be a father to thee, I will be a mother, even should I go from door to door to beg thee bread!"

Well, my brethren, what you would do for a poor orphan, will you not do it for these poor

souls? Reflect that they are not strangers to you. Think that those souls belong to you, not only by favour, but by blood. And among all those voices, which confusedly reach your ears, do you not distinguish one which more especially speaks to your heart? the voice of a father or a mother, of a son, or of a husband, of one of those, in short, whose life thou wouldst have prolonged, even at the expense of thy own? When your father lay upon that bed of death, his moans pierced your heart; you held him in your arms as though you would prevent him from abandoning you by abandoning life. His hand was raised upon your head to bless you; the same hand which, already cold, he stretched toward you as the hand of the drowning man who cries: "A hand! a hand! and I shall be saved!" And that same hand is again stretched out toward you with the cry: "Where art thou? O! thou who once calledst me by sweetest names; thou wouldest then prolong my life, and wouldest only have prolonged my exile. Come, now, to my aid, and help to send me to Heaven. I have but thee, and thou comest not to help me." O, if I could but for a moment take the semblance of these your dead; if you could only recognize them in me! And hear what they ask of you! "Friend, I was intimately connected with thee in life; in

the name of our ancient friendship, one little prayer!"

"Brother, we have borne the same name, we have been nourished at the same breast; sometimes I was of use to thee in the other world; brother, in exchange, one little prayer!"

"My son, I have suffered for thee; one little prayer for me!"

"My father, thou lovedst me so much, do yet one thing more for me—pray that I may be sent quickly to Heaven and happiness."

These souls are near you; you must feel that they are—you must know that they are—you must hear that they are.

They are full of hope—waiting for your help. And Jesus Christ, who has shed His blood for them, and their guardian angels join with the other angels in saying to you: "Pray for them! Pray for them!" And are there any who will not pray? No, my brethren, for such a one would have neither faith nor heart.

Peroration.—The glass of water given to the poor man for the love of God refreshes him, and is not unfruitful to the giver. The Holy Spirit has said so.

Thus the works of Charity that we do for the poor dead carry relief to them, and are not with-

out advantage to us. They have their reward. For Charity, which cannot be better employed than on these souls, united to God by ties of love and bonds of charity, bestows on us three separate rewards—*Remedy for the Past, Help for the Present, Hope for the Future.*

Remedy for the Past.—Let us throw a glance on our past life. How many days, how many weeks, how many months, and, perhaps, how many years taken from grace, taken from God! Yes, the absolution of the Priest has removed the stain, but something remains—the debt. For what penitence have we done for our sins? I know not what your conscience says, but mine tells me of an abyss which tears cannot fill up; other means are needed. We have robbed God of one portion of our existence; let us give Him another. We have robbed Him of one part of our soul; let us give Him another. This is reparation for the past.

Then there is *Help for the Present.* Do you think that those souls will forget you when they shall have arrived in Heaven? Is not Heaven the land of gratitude and remembrance? No, they will not forget you; they will not leave you to yourself. They will obtain of God for you the best of graces. “I pray,” says S. Augustine, “I pray for the dead, that the dead when they get to

Heaven may pray for me." S. Catherine, that fervent lover of Jesus, experienced it. She says that she never asked a favour of the souls in Purgatory without obtaining it, and that many graces which she could not obtain by the intercession of the saints she obtained through the intercession of the souls in Purgatory.

Finally, the third recompense is *Hope for the Future*. What help we shall have in our necessities, what consolation in our troubles, what assistance in the hour of death! Ah, yes, in your last agony, in that supreme moment, the souls whom you have contributed to send to Heaven will be there about your bed to advocate your cause, to reanimate your courage. They will be there, not as judges, but as protectors, to place the works which you have done for them in the scales of Divine Justice. And when, on leaving this world, you will have to pass through the expiatory prison, how glad you will be, O, my brethren, to have listened to the voice of Religion. You will behold fulfilled in yourselves the words of Christ, "By what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again." Your memory will remain in the memory of the living, your name will be repeated at the altar as one of the dead; in one word, you will be free, because you have freed others. Weep, then, ye who have lost a beloved being. Poor

widow, unbraid those locks which grief has turned untimely grey. Poor mother, press to thy bosom the cold marble which covers the ashes of thy child. Lament, poor old man, for the prop of thy declining years. But when the excess of your grief is passed, raise your eyes to Heaven and behold it, for there your dear ones will go if you pray for them. Pray, then, for them, and they will pray for you until you meet to glorify the Lord to all eternity.

XXI.

THE LOVE OF JESUS.

BRETHREN,—In the religious economy of the Christian faith there exists one virtue of surpassing importance, and this is Charity! It is the object and end of all the commandments, of all the prophecies, the object and end of all laws. It animates and vivifies our actions, which without it would be sterile and insufficient for our salvation. So great is its efficacy, so great is its influence, that the Apostle Paul said, “If I should have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I should be nothing.”

Charity has a double object: God loved in Himself and for Himself above all things, and man loved as the reflection of God and of His adorable perfections. Charity is our virtue; it is the virtue of Christianity. It is even more; it is the proper and exclusive virtue of Christianity. It is true that men, under the ancient covenant and before the coming of Christ, professed to love God with all their heart and with all their strength,

and to love their brethren, but they allowed themselves some reservations. Jesus Christ comes, our God, our Lord. He comes, not to destroy the law, but to complete and perfect it. What says He, and what does He? Ah, brethren, we are in the law of grace—this is our law, not that of fear, but that of charity and pure love. Christ comes and says, “Love your enemies; do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you.” And in a solemn moment, in order to manifest to all generations the special character of His gospel and to give the august token by which His disciples should be known, what does He say? He does not say, they shall know you by the miracles which you shall do in My name, nor through your zeal in preaching My doctrine, nor even by the heroic devotion whereby you confirm the sanctity of My teachings. But “by this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another.”

Therefore, brethren, our heart should ever be an altar where this sacred fire should continually burn, the fire of the love of God and of the love of our neighbour, a fire out of which one flame shall ascend to the Lord and another to our brethren, an altar upon which both flames burn together. But, alas! just the reverse too often

happens. God seeks for friends and asks for souls to love Him, promising them great recompense of good things, but how seldom doth He meet with a sincere soul. Unfortunately it is so but, O! that it should be so, that we do not love our fellow-creatures. And yet it must be so because without the true love of God we cannot truly love men. Truly to love them we must love them in God, and if we try to love them apart from God and regard them apart from God we are not likely to love them generously or constantly. What remedy is there, then, brethren, for this grievous evil, especially grievous in its consequences? We must return to Christ, and keep close to Him and to His love. For, says the apostle, "it is of His fulness that we receive everything." In short, brethren, we cannot love Christ without loving God and our fellow-creatures, neither can we hate Christ without hating God and our fellow-creatures.

If, then, brethren, we cannot love Christ without loving God and loving men, we cannot hate Christ without hating mankind. Who is Jesus Christ? We have seen and proved that Christ is the God-man—that is, that He is true God and true man, perfect God and perfect man. Now, this doctrine being admitted, what follows? If

Jesus Christ is God, if He be truly God, do you imagine that we can love Him without loving God, or love God without loving Him? "I and My Father," says Jesus, "are one God;" and to Philip, "Who seeth Me seeth My Father also." These two loves cannot, therefore, be divided. Carry on this reasoning. If Jesus Christ is God, if Jesus Christ is truly God, do you imagine that we can hate Him without hating God, that we can hate God without hating Christ? Therefore, love and hatred of Christ are the thermometer of love and of hatred toward God, and the test of our sentiments towards Him.

Let us take the same argument in speaking of humanity. Since Jesus Christ is not only God, but man, and as such the concrete representative of mankind, if we hate Christ we are also logically obliged to hate the human race, and if we love Christ we also love the human race, because He bears it in Himself. Yes, brethren, Jesus Christ presents Himself to us with this sublime prerogative, that one cannot love or hate Him without treating God and man in the same way. When Jesus Christ came into the world He created these two loves, but He bears them in Himself, and they are born and grow with Him. Therefore, who so loves Christ loves also men and God.

Let us begin with the love of God. Jesus

Christ presents Himself to the human race, and says, "You shall love me with all your mind, with all your heart, and with all your strength. I require of you the homage of your hearts." Brethren, what will Jesus do to establish this kingdom, about which no one had thought before Him? How will He raise up in all ages generations which shall adore Him with an ardent love? Men draw the multitude by the prestige of glory, by the attraction of promises, by the ardour of their discourses, by the fascination of their accents or their person. But Christ—where is His glory and fame? Born in a poor cottage and in obscurity, He grows up to labour and to die the degrading death of the cross, bound between two malefactors. And what are His promises and the inducements He holds out? "You shall be hated, and persecuted, and put to death," and when He wants men to love Him He says, "When I shall be raised up" upon the cross "I will draw all things to Me." Was there ever, brethren, a more hopelessly-conceived design or a more successful one? Enough! It was the design of Christ, and He was loved. All the ages and all mankind unite with one voice in replying to the Apostle of God, "Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that we love Thee." It has been related that the prisoner of St. Helena, in his long hours of solitude, amused himself by

reviewing the effigies of remarkable historic personages, and when that of Jesus Christ passed before him he exclaimed, "Behold the Man who has annexed the human race." Sublime words! Yes, human nature became annexed to Christ; He has consecrated to mankind a boundless and durable love. We know, my brethren, how human affections are more or less circumscribed, and that however much enthusiasm we may create, we only succeed in making ourselves loved by a very few; the circle of our admirers may, perhaps, extend to a country, or even to a nation, but rarely passes a frontier, and on the other side of this river or that mountain our name and influence are unknown. There are, it is true, some rare examples of men who have won great fame and admiration, but even the renown of these has not been world-wide. But here we find a love which has triumphed over space and conquered distance. Do we know any country in which the name of Christ does not thrill hearts?—in which the mother does not repeat it to her child?—in which the dying man does not invoke it as the anchor of hope? And when the cause of the King of Heaven is menaced by the kings of the earth, is there a single city where thousands of combatants do not arise and say to the Ruler of hearts, "Behold us, Lord; for Thee we will fight for life or death." The nations.

are moved; the people take arms; knights and cavaliers commence their march to the cry, "*God wills it.*" And where do they go? To deliver the sepulchre of Christ. And the faithful from all quarters flock to the Holy Land, to Bethlehem, Gethsemane, and Calvary to kiss the soil which received the prints of His feet, which was bathed with His sweat and with His blood, in order that they may carry thence a morsel of His cross, a thorn from His crown.

Then there are men who are continually sacrificing themselves to Him, and who cry with S. Paul, "that neither famine or nakedness, or danger or persecution, or the sword" can separate them from the love of Christ. The earth is full of His glory. Orators celebrate it in their discourses, priests chaunt it, painters depict it on immortal canvases, sculptors portray the awful beauty of His features, music goes about in search of celestial harmonies to inaugurate His birth, or mourn His death. Even architecture has spoken through her stones, and has said to the marble, "Arise, for I would give thee a form." And the stones have come to life, and under the intelligent hand of the artist magnificent columns have appeared, supporting boldly spanned arches, and above clerestory and majestic architrave, magnificent cupolas rise toward heaven, as hearts ascend

on wings of love, and we behold our basilicas! And as to Jesus Christ, we cannot take a step without meeting with some sign of Him. Everywhere we find the Cross, on the edge of precipices, as on the rocky shore of the ocean, on the tops of the highest and most inaccessible mountains as on the altars of our churches, from the east to the west, from deserts, and woods and forests to populous cities, all unite in the concert of creation to exalt the name of Christ. Jesus Christ is the centre of *Christian* hearts. We are divided by interests, we are divided by nationality, but let a venal pen but touch our Jesus! We forget all our differences, we forget everything, a spark of electricity passes through us, and we all unite against the intruder. Before Him no one can remain indifferent, we must love or hate Him, bless or blaspheme Him. O, brethren, the love of Jesus, which has conquered Space, has conquered Time as well. It has been said that there is nothing so noble on earth as the human affections, and nothing so fragile as the kingdom called the kingdom of love; in fact, there may have been men who have been able to preserve the love of others in life, but when death comes, what happens? We see it only too frequently. Doubtless, men will mourn when you leave this world, your parents' and your friends' hearts will be broken

with grief, but wait a little while, and if you are not entirely forgotten, you will no longer be immensely loved. And love does not always wait for death; sometimes a caprice, a nothing, suffices to expel it from the heart upon whose fidelity we had so confidently reckoned. For our hearts love novelty, and that which to-day is love, to-morrow may be indifference. And if this be true of man considered individually, what shall we say of mankind considered collectively? Who has not heard men blaspheme to-day what they yesterday adored, and trample upon that which they yesterday respected! Such is the history of the human heart. But here we have a love which has conquered the mobility and fickleness of human nature. Nineteen centuries ago Jesus Christ was deposed from the Cross; nineteen centuries ago Jesus Christ brought this holy flame of love into the world, and prophesied its extension; and nineteen centuries of struggle, nineteen centuries of sophisms and negation, have not only been unable to extinguish it, but even to diminish its intensity. Schism has been impotent before it. Photius succeeded in separating the East from the Church, but he could not cancel the image of Christ in the hearts of the people. Henry VIII. created heresies in England, but the spirit of Christ still spreads its protecting wings over that powerful

nation. Luther broke the bond which bound together the western nations, but the spirit of Christ has not abandoned the German people, and in France, even after Voltaire and Rénan, Jesus is loved and venerated, so that Rénan himself was constrained to confess, "Jesus is more loved in the present day than while He lived on the earth." And what can unbelief do against Jesus Christ? His enemies may rob Him of a city, a kingdom, or a nation, they may shut up His churches, pull down His altars, break His crosses, tear His gospel to pieces, and throw its pages to the winds; but while the tempest of unbelief is raging, and unbelief appears to triumph, what is this great multitude that we see advancing from beyond the ocean? Indians, savages, barbarians—their foreheads shining with the waters of baptism—come to fill up the deserted ranks and to sing the glories of Christ.

The apostasy of one people is compensated by the conversion of another. Thus it is that Christ reigns. When a nation or a people will no longer obey Him, He takes His cross, calls His apostles, and says to them, "Carry this, My banner, and this, My token, to the nations who know Me not." And around His cross and around His banner, upon which is inscribed, *Truth, Charity, and Liberty*, gather new tribes and a new people. My

brethren, how shall we not love this love which Time itself, which destroys everything, has been unable to destroy !

We are far, very far from Jesus Christ. We have not seen His face, we have not listened to His words, we have not witnessed His miracles, we have not heard Him preach His doctrine, but, after Him, how many nations, how many empires, how many republics have disappeared. And yet the love of Christ, all living, breathing and palpitating, has come down through the ages even to us, and we, although far from Him, give Him in return the purest part of our existence, which is "Love." Let us give a glance, my brethren, at the history of the love of Christ, so beautiful, so consoling, so rich in sacrifices. Look at the apostles. They were thrown into prisons, tortured, beaten with rods, and they go on their way rejoicing, because they are counted worthy to suffer for Jesus. Their hearts cannot contain their transports of ecstasy. "The heart of S. Paul," says S. John Chrysostom, "is become the heart of Christ, therefore he is obliged to invent a new language, and say, 'To me to live is Christ.'" But not the apostles alone were so minded. See that aged man in the amphitheatre—what fire in his glance, what accents on his lips. "Let every suffering be mine, let me also become

a prey to the tigers." This is the effect of the love of Jesus. See that young girl, so beautiful, so pure—the son of the Roman prefect has asked for her hand in marriage. Rome makes merry and prepares for the feast. But she rejects him, saying that she is the spouse of Christ, and in order the sooner to rejoin her spouse, she lays her head on the block. "She was mad," you say; yes, mad with love for Jesus! See yon mother, surrounded by her seven children; the first is killed and she offers him to God, the second dies, the third, the fourth, the fifth, and the sixth are taken from her and killed, she herself hands them over to the executioner with a good courage. O, God, but the very animals defend their young, and she offers them up. The seventh remains. She grows pale and trembles, but why? She trembles, fearing lest her child may be wanting in courage, for it is only seven years old! She kneels before him and persuades him caressingly, and almost leads him with her own hand to martyrdom! Was she mad, that mother? Yes, brethren, she was mad; she was beyond herself, but all through love for Jesus. The very executioners declare themselves weary, but not so the victims; the martyrs take up for the love of Jesus the sword which falls from their murderers' hands, through hatred of the tyrant. And what

pagan Rome then witnessed has still continued. Victims have not been wanting since. The love of Jesus has opened voluntary prisons, has kindled funeral piles, has erected crosses, upon which death has seemed too sweet, and martyrs have repeated with dying lips the words of S. John: "That which I ask, Lord, is to suffer for Thy Name." It is this love which has produced saints and martyrs. It is this which in the amphitheatre sustained the courage of the aged and the young, who smiled at pain while their executioners grew pale and trembled. "The love of Christ constraineth me," said S. Paul, and in this love we find the compendium of all religion. "*Charitas Christi urget me*" is the cry of the young apostle, as he tears himself from the arms of his desolate mother, bids adieu to his own country, and goes to foreign climes among an unknown people, to carry salvation and civilization to those savages. Yes, for the love of Christ, he goes where torments and, perhaps, death await him. "*Charitas Christi urget me*" is the cry of the maiden, who, seeing that so many hate Jesus, offers herself as a victim for them, that they may, one day, be saved. "*Charitas Christi urget me*" is the cry of innocence and repentance, which prefers the silence of the cloister to the noise of the world, and is ready to raise an altar to Christ upon its former ruins.

Seek, seek, my friends, in the history of our religion a single sacrifice which has not been inspired by the love of Christ. Without this we can explain nothing. Without this I could no longer understand how *my* saint, Francis of Assisi, from the top of a mountain in Alvernia, invited the birds of the air and the flowers of the field to sing the praises of the victim of whom he bore the stigmata. Nor could I understand that other Italian saint, whom we call S. Catherine of Siena, who tore the crown of thorns from the head of Jesus, preferring it to her own of roses. Nor could I explain the sublime exclamation of S. Theresa, "*O morire, O soffrire*"—"Let me die, or suffer."

And is it not, my friends, the same love which now inspires us with mercy and resignation, subdues the passions, and makes us practise duty? If there be some rich and compassionate persons, is it not for the love of Christ? If we find those who help us carry the burden of life, if the poor are patient, is it not for the same reason? If we forget and pardon, is it not for the love of Christ? Do we not know that Jesus Christ was announced by angels, that at His death the rocks were rent? Do we not know that He was loved, and, considering this universal law of love to Christ, we are reminded of the saying of Napoleon

Bonaparte, "I, who understand men, say Jesus Christ is more than man—He is God." The love of God and the love of man are one and the same; these two loves are indivisible. The love of man carried to so passionate an extreme was unknown before the coming of Christ. It began when Christ by His birth bore us the love of God, and human love was by Him exalted. And this, brethren, is the greatest marvel of all! How often we say, How can we love God whom we cannot see? But I say, how can we love human nature which we do see? It has been said that it is beauty alone which disposes the mind and the heart to the service of love; how then can one love and serve human beings in their squalor and misery? How, say you, can God so far off, and hidden, touch my heart? And, I say, does human nature, which is so near us, touch our hearts? Where was, in fact, this love for human beings before the coming of Christ? What did the ancient sages say about it? I will not say they are silent. There are fragments of the ancient philosophers which speak of compassion, there is the hospitality sung by the poets. There are Cicero's words, "*Charitas generis humani*." There is also Seneca, though his sayings may have been imbued with a tincture of Christianity, which had already enlightened the world. But what are

these broken phrases murmured in the schools? What could they do toward inaugurating the reign of love and charity? And how could they cope against the demon of selfishness and cruelty which ruled the world? Have not learned men, poets and masters of the human conscience, written things to make one shudder about poverty, women, and slavery? Was it not Cato who exhorted men to sell their old servants, as they would old oxen? Was it not Seneca who, speaking of the destruction of weak and deformed infants, said, "This is a work of reason, not of the heart?" Did not Marcus Aurelius forbid mourning with those in affliction? Was it not the Emperor Valerian who gathered together the poor of his kingdom and, putting them into a vessel, caused them to be drowned? Was it not in the circus here in Rome that slaves were given as a prey to wild beasts, and as food for eels in the lakes? Such was the love of man before Christ. With Him a new humanity appeared, with Him the pure reign of love between man and man commenced. The world was so incapable of comprehending this sublime love, that at first it rejected it with horror. And then we find it hidden underground in the epoch of the catacombs and of the heroism of the martyrs, when Jesus was loved at the point of the

sword, when men prepared themselves for the martyrdom of the morrow by praying for their executioners. The resistance made by the world to charity was truly prodigious: all rose in arms, all strove against it—prejudices, morals, institutions, philosophers, people, and emperors! But all in vain. Charity comes from Christ, and charity wins! And before long the ancient Roman Society regenerated in the palaces of the emperors began to offer to the world a spectacle hitherto unknown, a society in which was recognized the nobility of strength in man and the nobility of weakness in woman—in which the slave was respected as the possessor of a soul, giving him an equal right with others as regards immortality.

The Reformation extended even to the household of the Cæsars, and thus commenced the regeneration of society. But charity did not stop here. The benefits of charity began, and, as Virgil said, “A new progeny descended on the earth.” Hardly had the apostles scattered their words among the multitude than we see men caring about the misery and misfortunes of their fellows; we see refuges and asylums opened for the poor and unfortunate—for it is to Christian charity that we owe the foundation of hospitals. And these blessings of charity were multiplied in the

middle ages; then men could not walk for many paces upon Christian land without meeting with Christian institutions, such as houses for poor widows and orphans, in which help was and is still provided. Consider that young girl of patrician birth; she possesses not only all external qualities, but also those of the heart and mind; a rare intelligence, delicacy and generosity of mind, sweetness, education, amiability of character—Nature, in short, seems to have poured into her lap all her choicest gifts; one would say that she is destined to reign as a queen over the world which celebrates her praises. But one day a sweeter and still more harmonious voice than that of the seducing world invades her heart. This voice says to her: “Listen, my daughter, hearken unto me; forsake the house of thy father and of thy mother, for the King of Kings loves thy candour and thy beauty, and desires them for Himself.” And the young girl listens with docility to the enchanting voice, tears herself from the arms of her weeping mother, renounces all sweetness in the present and hopes for the future, casts off the badge of the world to adopt that of Christ, and place herself under His shadow. See her, O, brethren, with her grey mantle, seated by the bedside of the sick, binding up loathsome wounds. See her seeking out

orphans to become a mother to them; see her going from door to door in quest of alms to succour the helpless; see her afar in the field of battle, among the wounded and the dying, consoling some and teaching others to die in the Grace of the Lord, raising a prayer to Him for those who have died in the encounter. Who is this young maiden? She is Christian Charity! And shall I tell you further what Christian Charity has done for the ransom of slaves? She has always been occupied in this beautiful work. See the slave—poor, unhappy—how miserable is his condition—without family, without country, bound with cruel chains, condemned to inhuman labours, under the rod of a renegade, and exposed himself to apostasy. Who will go in search of the poor slave? Christian Charity! See those two men clothed in strange costume, who are preparing to cross the seas and go into inhospitable countries to carry out their grand design?

Those two men are S. Peter and S. John of Malta, founders of the Order of Mercy and of the Order of the Holy Trinity, and destined to ransom slaves. Their love for the human race is so great that nothing alarms or deters them—neither the length of the journey, nor the perils of the sea, nor the unhealthiness of the climate, nor the threats of the tyrants. They are even

ready to give their life to rescue their poor brethren. And who can tell, O, my friends, how many unfortunates have not been brought back through their efficacy to the bosom of their families and country?

And what are these missions if not the personification of Christian Charity? And the brother, San Giovanni di Dio, who sees none but madmen, who hears none but madmen, and is in perpetual danger of becoming mad himself—is he not imbued with the noble spirit of sacrifice? And Father Damien, who laboured so long among the lepers that he became one himself and died! And what is this if not Christian Charity? And if we ascend those heights, covered with perpetual snow, upon the Mount St. Bernard, what do we discover? It is night, the Church of the Convent is full of lights, sacred chants resound under the dome of the temple; without, the hurricane is let loose, which howls and roars as though it would wrest the edifice from its foundations. Enter, and kneeling low upon the pavement you will see a young man of ardent mind, of warm heart, with a flame kindled in his eyes, and before him stands an aged monk, who thus addresses him: “And do you still, my son, persist in your design?” “Yes; oh, yes, father.” “Then you swear to

pass your life in this desert place, and to dedicate yourself to the task of saving the poor wanderers lost in the mountains?" "Yes, father, I swear it." "Peace, then, be with you." And the youth rises, radiant with joy; and, in spite of icy cold and falling snows, begins his mission, and if he can save from certain death some one unfortunate traveller, returns to the monastery full of ineffable happiness. But one day the avalanche overtakes him, and the snow, symbol of the purity of his mind, serves him as a funeral pall. The young monk has died to save his fellow creatures. What is this, then, but Christian Charity?

Beside these are many other pious institutions flourishing in the midst of us, which, with the advantage of experience, show themselves worthy of those which have preceded them. Men for nineteen centuries have occupied themselves in many good ways, but all the charitable institutions which the world contains owe their existence to Christian Charity. Now, I ask you, my friends, how does this happen? Who has inspired the strength and constancy necessary for these sacrifices? "The human conscience of its own spontaneity," would you answer me? But this is not the work of man; neither flesh and blood, nor human consideration could have inspired such sacrifices. Men do not sacrifice for such motives

country, family, liberty, or life ! We must go higher ; and to whom, brethren ?

One day a Sister of Charity, on the field of battle, was occupied in binding up the wounds of a poor soldier. A squadron of the enemy's cavalry passed, and one of those barbarians, seeing the Sister intent on her pious office, struck her with his sword and cut off her hand. The poor woman turned her piteous face toward him, and with the bleeding stump made the sign of the Cross ! Therefore, brethren, we must ascend to the Cross of Jesus, who died for our salvation. It is only Jesus who can give us these inspirations ; it is only Jesus who can give us the strength to carry them out ; Jesus Christ alone can help us to conquer difficulties and overcome obstacles. Because, brethren, to love men, or feign to love them, when interest attaches us to them, is a common thing. To love men so long as a ray of beauty remains to satisfy the caprices of our hearts, is a common thing. To love some special soul akin to our own, to restrict our sympathy and our kindness to our own hearths, or to some friend, this also is common. But, friends, to love mankind with gratuitous love, to destroy one's self for love of mankind, to raise the edifice of love on the ruins of egoism and self-love ; to raise an altar for the sacrifice of our own interests, to love

men everywhere and always, to embrace the earth, and traversing the rigors of the Pole and the heats of the Equator; to go among men reduced to the state of brutes; to go among savages and say to them, "Brother, I love thee;" to love men when age and infirmities, or the degradation of vice, have reduced them to objects of loathing and disgust; to make but one family of all these unfortunates, and say, with the monk of Florence: "O, unhappy people, I love thee," and with Cottolengo, taking them and pressing them to his heart: "You are the jewels of my house"—this, this is the work of Jesus Christ. He alone could inspire such a holy work, who said: "That which thou doest unto the least of these my brethren, thou doest unto Me."

Ask all these heroes what is the source of their love? They contemplate Jesus Christ; through Him they look upon mankind; in the hands, and feet, and wounds of Jesus they discern the hands, and feet, and wounds of their poor brethren. They love Jesus Christ, and, as the effect of love is to represent continually to itself the beloved object, so in everything they see their sweet Jesus, who created in their minds that noble enthusiasm and that holy love. *Charitas Christi urget nos* is their motto; and from being the passionate lovers of their Lord, they become as a

consequence the passionate lovers of the human race. You may seek them in vain in antiquity; neither will you find them in nations who do not believe in Jesus. On the other hand, you will find them always at the foot of the Cross. And they have for ensign the words, which are to be seen inscribed on the facade of the House of Providence in Turin: "The love of Christ constraineth us!"

Peroration.—If we cannot love Christ without loving God and man, so we cannot hate Christ without hating God and man. But to hate Jesus! You shudder at the words, and say: "How would it be possible to hate Him, the Divine Redeemer, who, after suffering so much for us, has given us His blood and even His life?" And yet we know there was an age which took as its motto: "Let us crush the infamous One." But when Christ was hated, was God more loved? When Jesus was forsaken, was the cause of humanity better served? It should have been so, because were Christ an error, hating Jesus, we should have loved God better; getting rid of Jesus, the cause of humanity would have been better served. But instead of this, the contrary occurred. And this counter proof is convincing. No one has seen God, says Reason, in agreement with our Faith.

It was the Son, who came from the bosom of the Father, who came to relate to us the riches of the Divine Sanctuary, not by word alone, but also by His life. This is why in other regions we find glimmerings and symbols of God, but Christianity alone knows the true God. We know the living God, the true God, the personal God; we know how powerful He is, how He can *love*, how He can *punish*, how He can *reward*. Yes, we learn it every day in the permanent drama of Revelation, which by describing to us the sufferings and triumphs of Jesus Christ, shows us the *power* and the *clemency* of God; the power which has saved the world, and the clemency which redeemed mankind. And what happens when we reject Christ? In proportion as we reject Jesus, God returns to Heaven; nothing remains of Him but a faint image which very soon vanishes, so that we find ourselves in pure Atheism; and, as we do not dare to confess it to ourselves, as we feel that men will not accept this view of things, we still keep up a sort of distant idea of Him, and so, like a blind man groping in the midst of darkness, we go about seeking for the image of God. Now it is the God *Idea*, now the God *Nature*, now it is the God called *Humanity*, or rather *Nullity*! And poor human nature returns to the state in which it was before the coming of Christ. But having

got rid of God, human nature remains, and here the evidence of our counter proof increases. We have to do with men, who in the place of God, adore man and conceive the possibility of loving the latter without loving the former. But is it possible? Observe those who no longer wish for Christ are wanting not only in intelligence, but in heart; their intelligence is cold as a winter night, their heart is frozen like the marble of a tomb. They have not warmed their hearts through the heart of Jesus, but have shut them up in brutal egoism. In proof of which see what the philosophers of the last century did; they understood that to gain the multitude it was not sufficient to excite their passions by the name of Liberty; they understood that they must put something in the place of Charity, and they invented Philanthropy. Bitter irony, which destroys a divine, substituting for it a human institution, founded on pride and hatred toward Jesus Christ. And, moreover, what is their philanthropy? "Compassion," says Condorcet, "is a weakness, when it has not for object the general good." So that their philanthropy does not regard individuals or families; it only regards the general interests of mankind. "The grand secret of philanthropy," said a holy Bishop, "is to occupy itself with the masses, so that all one hears are groans over the

slavery of the people and the ills of mankind." Hypocritical cant, which made Rousseau exclaim : "These philosophers love the Tartars and do not love their neighbours." Listen to the dogmas of modern Socialism, as expressed in a recent publication, which expressions it is necessary to ponder well : "The prosperity of the strong, through the suppression of the weak, is the result of a beneficent law, because if we favour the development of the weak, we help toward the degradation of the human race." "But, father, you are wrong," I hear said by one of the most courageous among my auditors. "You are wrong ; because we know who hate and despise Jesus Christ, and yet are great benefactors to society." My friends, I believe to be in the right, and I answer with Padre Cæsari : "If he who rejects the faith of Christ has any virtue or any love for his fellow creatures ; if he does them any good, he owes it to the Christianity which is in him or around him, for we know that without the Cross of Christ, and without Christ he would never have thought to do this good. His beneficence, his philanthropy, which he considers as personal virtues, are Christian virtues. For nations have not only been established through Christianity, but live by it, and in it ; it is its air they breathe, and if this air were wanting they would be

suffocated.” In short, friends, when we drive away Jesus, and hate Jesus, our contempt for God and humanity does not stop at theories. The age which began with the cry: “Let us crush the infamous One,” ended by the terrible drama which the world will never forget. In one day executioners substituted Sophists—Jesus Christ was driven from the mind—the churches were shut, the altars profaned, the crosses broken, the priests massacred. There was a moment in which the nation seemed drunk with hatred against Jesus Christ; Atheism appeared triumphant, altars and temples were consecrated to it in public, and immodesty was proudly adored. Were men treated any better in consequence? Death was everywhere organized. Whole classes of citizens were given over to slaughter; there were even monsters who wished the desire of Nero could be realized, and that mankind had but one head that it might fall with a single blow. And to the Sophists, who declared God to be “*only an old word*,” and Jesus Christ “*the enemy*,” is now added the Nihilist, who would destroy society. My brethren, are not they the enemies of Jesus Christ, the men who are always speaking of liberty and practising tyranny? Are they not the enemies of Christ who speak to you of fraternity and sow the seeds of discord in your families and

in your city? Are they not Christ's enemies who speak to you of philanthropy and seek only to benefit themselves? O, then, let us keep our Christ; let us keep Him as the bond between heaven and earth, the link which unites men to God and to each other. For if ever the Faith of Jesus Christ disappear, what will become of our poor country?

Ah, brethren, let us pray that our love to our Divine Saviour may increase everywhere, so that amid the errors and deceptions of life we may always remain worthy of the Lord and of our brethren by maintaining our love for God and our fellow creatures.

XXII.

OUR FAITH.

Exordium.—Brethren, Jesus Christ, being come into the world, must needs be speak to us of religion. Religion is the bond which unites man to God, and this bond, being broken, or rather loosed, was in need of reparation, which was the work of Jesus. He had one only care—that of re-establishing the union between the heart of man and that of God. It was for this that He came upon earth. All men needed this aid, because all, without exception, lived in the darkness of error. And it was in the midst of this profound night that Jesus came to teach His religion, to announce His Gospel, and to train men to worship the true God. If we inquire upon what basis this union between the creature and the Creator is formed, the Gospel answers that there are three fundamental virtues which unite man with God, and these three are *Faith, Hope, and Charity*. These three virtues form the mysterious bond which raises earth to Heaven, the finite to the infinite. To

believe in God, hope in God, to love God, this is what Jesus requires of us, this is what should help us to attain the greatest ends. Faith approaches us to God; Hope is a mysterious link; Charity is an almost perfect link—all three together form that mysterious whole which is called Religion, and unites us to the Heavenly Father through the bounds of grace and goodness. Religion follows as a natural consequence, for it consists in the union between the heart of man and the heart of God. Let us study its significance, and begin with the first element of this union, which is *Faith*. When we speak of Faith, our moderns look at us, shake their heads, and smile, and say, “Remains of the mediæval ages.” But we also can look at them and shake our heads and say, “Fools of the nineteenth century.” And what is it they find ridiculous in our belief? It is Reason’s own sister. If one touches on truth with the right hand, the other does the same with the left. They are two pages on the same text—two streams from the same spring; they are like those Grecian harps which, though different in form, emitted a similar sound. Christian Faith, like man’s reason, is a supernatural light confirming and completing the natural light. With the eye of reason alone we see but little and ill, but armed with the telescope of Faith we see

many things more clearly which at first we could scarcely perceive, and discover out of unknown depths a world of things which before appeared to us involved in the mists of obscurity. David points to this when he says, "*Incerta ed oculta sapientiæ tuæ manifestati mihi.*"

But, Father, how shall we accept this belief if it lowers and degrades our intellect and obliges reason to abdicate her rights? Is not this what is said? Kindly listen to me whilst I answer you.

Brethren, in what way does Faith degrade man and oblige his reason to abdicate her rights? They say, "Because Faith obliges us to believe what we do not see," and they say this as though philosophy were satisfied by the criterion of sight alone! Do we not believe in the Poles of the earth? Do we not believe in natural forces? And yet we do not see all this. Not to admit Faith, and to acknowledge the criterion of sight alone, is to mutilate the masterpiece of creation, which is man. For God has not only given us a body to put us in communication with the visible world, but also a soul to put us in communication with the invisible, and the refusal to believe on other than material proofs is a protest against the soul; it is placing ourselves, as the Scripture saith, on a level with the "horse and mule, which have no understanding."

Without Faith our horizons would be very limited. We should neither believe in the men who preceded our birth, nor in the heroes of our beloved country, nor in their actions, accomplished before our time. We should not believe in history, because it speaks of facts from which we are separated by time. Neither should we believe in regions and countries which we have not seen, nor traversed—but of which geography informs us—because separated from them by space. We should not believe in our soul, and the compartments of our brain would be so badly furnished, that while we repute ourselves superior to the vulgar herd, by believing only what we see, we should find ourselves in the lowest place of all, because he who only believes with the eyes of his body shows plainly that his mental eyesight has failed.

But, great God ! do we not perceive how men and society need Faith, and that without it we cannot live ? Look at social life ; banish Faith, and see how everything fails you. In fact, society says to you, “ This is your name, your family, your country. These existed before you did. Your reason and your senses cannot teach you these things. You must believe them on hearsay.” Take away Faith, and you renounce your family and your country. Society places a book in your

hands—the history of your country and of its great men. Take away Faith, and you must deny history and remain without patriots, with memorials, and without a past. Society tells you by means of your teachers that such and such are scientific or literary or philosophical truths, and you must believe them. Take away Faith and instruction becomes impossible. Faith is necessary everywhere, in public as in private life. Can you explain rationally even human affection? And yet, who would have the courage to say he does not believe in it? Want of belief in the relations of social life is impossible; in fact, on what are contracts, friendships, marriages founded? Upon things we do not see; therefore our relations toward God should also depend on these, for if under the reign of reason the words, *I believe*, are the foundation of temporal society, why should they not be also that of religious society?

If we only want to believe what we see, let us at least be consistent and not only incredulous by halves; let us reject the testimony of men, let us retire from society, because to live in society we must believe. Let us take refuge in a desert, and there, alone with our reason, isolated from God and our fellows, let us dig a grave, but let us dig it very deep in the ground. A woman as remark-

able for her political adventures as for her scandalous intrigues, Anna Gonzaga, was converted by a dream. It appeared to her that in passing through a forest she met with a blind man in a cottage. She approached him, and asked if he had been blind from his birth, or if he had become so afterward. "From my birth," said he. "Then you can know nothing of the beauty of the sun, or of the flowers, or of all Nature?" "No; but I believe them to be stupendously beautiful, and my blindness ought to convince you that there are many beautiful things which escape our sight." On hearing this Anna felt herself intoxicated with joy, and embraced the blind man, who had shown her a light more beautiful than that of which he was deprived—the light of Faith. She wept and was converted, and Bossuet spoke an eloquent panegyric over her tomb. Let us admit, say some, that we can believe what we do not see; but how, without degrading one's self, can one admit what one does not understand? "Comprehension is the measure of belief." Tell me then, but tell me sincerely, what is it you believe: your creed must be very poor, for Bacon said that man does not even know the "whole of nothingness." Do you understand the motions of the mind and of thought? Do you understand the essence of matter? After a thousand investigations you

still find yourselves in the presence of the *unknown*, some question is ever arising which you are unable to answer; we are surrounded by mystery, and in every order of things the truth far outstrips science. Science one day ascends to her observatory, examines, studies, measures, writes, and all at once cries, "I have found the laws of attraction." "And what is this law?" say the ignorant. "That I cannot tell," says she. She descends into a garden, digs a hole, places a bulb in it, watches the bulb develop a plant and afterward a flower. How does this happen? "Oh, this is vegetation!" But what is vegetation? We see the wonders of Nature, but cannot understand her secrets. Let us go to the sea-shore and see the waves tossed by the wind; but whence cometh the wind?

My brethren, we do not understand the mysteries of Nature, and shall we pretend to understand those of Religion? Mystery is the seal God puts upon His works, and I declare to you that I should despise a religion which was entirely without mysteries. Religion, to be true, must be infinite, and, like God, accesible on one side, inaccessible on the other.

The traveller on the plain does not feel his insignificance; take him to the foot of the Cordilleras and he will exclaim, "I am a pigmy!"

And what is Religion? It is the manifestation of God to man, and our mind is limited and finite, God's is illimitable and infinite; therefore, if we discard Religion because there are dogmas which pass the radius of our intelligence, we are like the fool described by Dante in the tenth chapter of his "Paradise." To admit only what our reason comprehends? But don't you see the conceit of these words? Is your reason the only metre of truth, and cannot the infinite mind of God see farther than you?

If every dogma must be rejected as erroneous and false because our reason does not understand all of them, do you not see how narrow the kingdom of truth would become, and how it would finally vanish from the earth?

To the poor and ignorant everything is mystery; they might well deny everything, no one would have a better right to be incredulous. And yet the poor are, generally speaking, more believing than the rich. And then these mysteries that we would do away with under the pretence that we do not understand them, who gave them to us? God, substantial truth, and who has a right to be believed. When it has been proved that God has revealed a thing, we ought to adore it in silence. As to myself, brethren, I say with Saint Jerome, "*Mea ignorantia sic credit*"—"My ignorance

believes it," and knowing that God is superior to me, I do not discuss it. Thus Faith is simple, but is it not preferable to their learned blasphemy? And mark this strange anomaly. The proud man who despises the mysteries of Faith is often most abjectly superstitious concerning those of Nature. Tell him, as I told you last Sunday, that there is fire in Purgatory, and he will not believe you, because he has not analyzed it; but tell him instead, Saturn weighs so much, and he will believe you as though he held the scales in his own hands.

And while their system bases everything on probabilities, they take no account of the probabilities which must exist on God's side until He have ceased to be infinite and within reach of the comprehension of the creature who is finite.

My brethren, if we only admit what we understand, let us, at least, not admit of those systems which, instead of mystery, are made of contradictions. Let us not admit of Pantheism, which attributes contradictory qualities to the same substance; let us not admit of Materialism, which attributes to matter the faculty of thought; let us not admit of nor accept Deism, which robs God of every perfection; let us not admit of nor accept Atheism, which leaves virtue without reward and vice without punishment, by taking

from us the perfect distributor of both rewards and punishments.

Let us not admit of those theories which, instead of mystery, place contradictory and absurd theories.

The metaphysics of our religion are much more enlightened than those of your philosophy. "But, father," I hear you say, "How would you that we should embrace your faith, when it is contrary to progress?"

My brethren, what a host of things are given to understand to the youth of the day by this one word—progress! But there are three kinds of progress—there is material progress, intellectual progress, and moral progress. Taking, however, for granted that you are not of those who in man see only matter—for these there is no progress—the progress of matter is nonsense; it is the brute that remains always a brute, and does not progress. Do you understand? The crab will always walk backward. But let us leave the brutes and speak of men. To which of these progresses is our Faith opposed? To material progress? But, my friends, in what way does the steam engine, the telegraph, the railway, or gas offend our dogmas? Don't the bishops themselves go to give them their benediction, and is it not genius, Christian and Catholic, which has brought about

these things? And the same with the industrial arts. How is our Faith contrary to industry and commerce? But our Faith blesses the workshop and the instruments of labour; it recommends patience and obedience to the workman, as it recommends justice and charity to the employer, and to both respect toward God and gratitude to Him for successful undertakings. Seek, seek a true success—a success which shall be useful to the country, to the family, and to society, and which at the same time shall be contrary to the Faith, and you will not find it. And for this reason the English, who so well understand material progress, in their universal exhibition of 1851, wrote on its highest cupola, “*Gloria in excelsis Deo.*” And during the distribution of the prizes an immense chorus of children sang these words, which we repeat also in our temples: “*Laudate eum omnes populi, laudate eum omnes gentes.*”

Is belief contrary to *intellectual progress*? Who does not know that Faith is the first and most sublime source of this progress? Faith is nothing else than the light of heaven descended upon earth—nothing but the genius of God, which lays hold of the intellect of man to elevate it. Was not the Gospel the first sun of modern civilization? Can you deny that the first participators in civili-

zation were Christians? None of you can have forgotten the words of the great philosopher Bacon: "Much science leads to God; a little science leads away from God." And we see this every day.

We find men in the present day who pretend to be learned, and not only misunderstand God, but blaspheme Him; while, on the contrary, the great Newton, who was a true scientist, uncovered his head whenever the name of God was mentioned. The scientists of the age blaspheme against God and the Church, whilst Ampère, a truly scientific man, exclaimed on his knees, "O, God, how great art Thou, and how beautiful is Thy religion!" And shall we say that Faith is contrary to the *progress of the Arts*?

Ah! my friend, ask rather what has made holy France, Belgium, and Spain a living museum, a perpetual source of delight to the traveller, including the wonderful discoveries of Pompeii. At such an accusation our country might well arise in wrath, for does she not possess incomparable monuments of artistic genius? Can she not boast of displaying in her galleries and palaces the immortal works of Raphael, Perugino and a thousand others; in her convents and churches, the frescoes of Fra Angelico, and the statues of Michael Angelo? And can she not

show the majolicas of Luca della Robbia, read us a canto of the Divine Dante, and perform a strophe of the *Stabat* of Rossini to prove to us, by similar facts, if her Religion be contrary to the progress of the Fine Arts? Beside which, if you accuse Religion as an enemy of Art progress, it proves small knowledge of history, for if you knew how often poor monks have saved Civilization, Literature, and the Fine Arts, you would not so speak. Yes, we are proud of our civilization, but we forget its origin. European civilization—the civilization of the *world*—is the work of our Faith.

Next, Is our belief contrary to *moral progress*? Was it not Jesus, my brethren, who first introduced the theory of *moral progress*? “Be My imitators,” He said. “Be ye perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect.” What prospects do not these sublime words open before us? Are they not enough to make heaven descend on earth? There are many weak souls, but Faith, by its grace, renders them pure and heavenly, till they become so like the angels that we are led to love them for their resemblance to them. Approach, ye who love progress, and consider our great saints, and behold them, these men of true progress!

See St. Vincent de Paul, a poor priest, who has

nothing, and who distributes millions to the poor. A poor priest, an angel of charity, who succours whole provinces desolated by pestilence. A poor priest who finds a mother for a thousand poor orphans, and gathers together an army of virgins who sacrifice themselves to alleviate all the miseries of humanity. This miracle has lasted for two hundred years. This, friends, is real progress, and there is no other. And thank God that our Italy has also had its S. Vincent de Paul. Do you remember Francesco Ludovico di Casoria? He went from door to door to console the misfortunes of others—true apostle of progress and charity. He found orphans and opened houses for them, and for the blind as also for the deaf and dumb. And he had them all taught, and opened schools.

He took pity on those poor women whom society condemns; on those unhappy ones, who, fallen themselves, induce others to fall, and opened for them houses of rehabilitation. He saw poor negroes and Moors oppressed and tormented, and he crossed the sea to obtain their freedom. And he would have accomplished two other works of benevolence had not God called him to Himself.

Behold then, brethren, how contrary is our Faith to *moral progress*!

“But, father, how can you say that your Faith is not contrary to *Science*?”

Upon this point I will not dwell at length, because I intend to treat of this subject in another Conference.

You say that Faith is contrary to Science; but the God of our faith is called the God of science; the God who has dictated the Gospel and the Bible; the God who created Nature, that nature which has never unsaid the Gospel or the Bible, but unites with Faith and Science to sing the glory of God. Faith and Science are only two rays of the same sun.

Seek, brethren, seek for any scientific progress which has been condemned by our Faith. On the contrary, you will find that there is no scientific progress that has not sustained it. In the middle ages it was the poor monks who discovered gunpowder, the rotation of the earth, the movements of the stars. And in the seventeenth century was it not Kepler and Newton, those deeply religious men, who gave rise to that splendid scientific movement which lasts even to our day?

But, observe that, in order to prove that Faith is contrary to Science, you must prove that among believers there has never been a true savant, and that among the true savants there has never been a believer. History teaches us the contrary.

Pico della Mirandola was a true savant, and he believed. He wrote thus to Aldus Manutius: "You want to devote yourself to the study of philosophy, but remember that philosophy is nothing if it depart from the Faith."

Descartes asserts that the most certain truths are revealed truths, and that therefore we must believe in the authority of God. And Newton, who was a true Scientist, read the Bible daily, and called it an inspired Book. Ampère said that one could make a long list of truly learned men who maintained that the Bible was of Divine origin. And thus we can impose silence on the enemies of these truths which are believed by Newton, defended by Pascal, and respected by Descartes.

"But, father, God has given us our reason to make use of it, and not to abandon ourselves to a blind faith."

Who wishes you to have a blind faith? On the contrary, see how the Church places reason as the basis of the rights of our Religion; how she says with S. Paul: "Let your service be reasonable." *Rationabile obsequium vestrum.*

S. Augustine advises us to "seek for the reason of our Faith." And does not the Church make use of reason in converting heretics? And has not she condemned the enemies of the Faith as

the enemies of reason? S. Victor says that Faith puts forward proofs of its credibility, so that one is obliged to confess "that if I deceive myself it is God Himself who deceives me, because these things can only come from God."

The Church who proposes our belief to us does not conceal her dogmas; she does not dread examination, but rather provokes it. Yes, she gives you her proofs, for, as Fontanelle says: "There is no religion but the Catholic which can give its proofs."

He who denies the Faith makes use of reason; but does he make a good use of it? These won't admit that God created the world, but they admit that it created itself. An intelligent power is repugnant to them; a blind power satisfies them. They deny a Supreme Ruler of the Universe, but are perfectly contented to recognize this wonderful and enchanting order as the result of the powers of Nature. The soul! That there is such a thing as a soul they have heard tell; but they have sought it and not found it. That the genius of Dante, and Michael Angelo, and the hearts of our heroes are formed of an atom of matter, they willingly admit.

But, my friends, is this making use of **their** reason?

It appears to me that when the Faith is driven out of our hearts, its empty place is filled with imagination and incredulity. Recall the beautiful words of Lacordaire: "Everything is good to him who has nothing." Since he does not believe in Christ, he believes in the greatest absurdities. And if you observe you will find that none are ever so credulous as the incredulous. He who does not believe in Christ believes in Voltaire's impiety and all sorts of ignominy, beginning from the doctrine of the Gnostics down to the newest system. He who cries out against superstition will believe in a Vishnu, or a Brahma, or in Mahomet. So we find men believing in Simon Magus, who became the Thaumaturg of those who did not believe in the miracles related in the Gospels. And the Emperor Justinus denied the Faith, but tremblingly consulted the entrails of his victims.

When the Faith began to waver in the middle ages witchcraft was in favour. In the eighteenth century the aberration reached its climax. The Marquis d'Argent is affected by the malefic witchcraft of the number 13; the Marshal of France swoons because the salt cellar is upset at his table; and, in short, the disciples of Voltaire say: "We believe everything, save that which our fathers believe;" and end by their philo-

sophical saturnalias and the evocation of mesmerism.

The free-thinkers of our day believe to have done with all such weakness of mind ; but, alas ! in proportion as rationalism extends its doctrines, what becomes of souls ? They abjure the Faith, but throw themselves into the arms of spiritualism. They deride the prophecies, but make acts of faith in magnetic divination ; they mock at angels and demons, but put themselves in communication with the genii of talking tables.

O, it is clear, my friends, that we lose a portion of our common sense when we lose our Faith. We believe in everything rather than the truth ; we fly to embrace every error and every fallacy, and more especially when it promises us popularity, or honour, or enjoyment of any sort.

For example : Here is a priest who has studied Religion during a lifetime ; he maintains that the Gospel is a Divine Word. A cobbler or a village doctor, who have never opened the Scriptures, say “ No.” And the cobbler and the doctor are pronounced to be right, and the priest wrong ! The Pope sends out an Encyclical Letter ; a newspaper writer, who understands the theatre better than theology, gets up and dares to censure it ; and there are even those who venture to

declare that the Pope is wrong, and the journalist right!

So much, dear friends, for the probity of Science!

And from men like this what has society to expect? Let us see.

Peroration.—Brethren, what are we to expect of these persons who make such a use of their reason? We may expect good.

How, good?

Yes, good; because they say: "You priests and you monks, if you understood your mission well, you ought to confine yourselves to preaching morality." So they want morality. But how is it possible to teach morality without the Faith?

Three days ago I received a letter, which, against my usual practice, I opened. It was from a warm-hearted youth, who wrote: "Father, instead of preaching what you have hitherto preached, preach us *patience, resignation, love, charity, and the spirit of sacrifice.*"

But how, my brethren, how attain these things without principles? How shall we have patience, resignation, and charity? How sacrifice ourselves for others if we do not believe in God? if we do not believe in Jesus Christ? if we do not believe in the rewards of a future life?

Bossuet said: "To live well we must believe well;" and he was right. Christian life may be compared to a building which consists of two distinct parts—the foundation and the edifice itself.

Would you not laugh at a man who would build a house without a foundation?

And so we ought to ridicule those who want morality without dogmas; we might as well want conclusions without premises.

It will be said, "Morality is sufficient."

No, friends, Morality is not sufficient.

Two kinds of Morality are presented to us: *Christian Morality* and the *Morality of Philosophy*.

Is the *Morality* of Christianity sufficient without Faith?

No; because we find among its precepts, *love your enemies, and do good to them that hate you*.

Now, on what is founded this precept of Christian Morality? Is it on the natural law?

No; for the natural law proclaims, "*An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth*."

It is founded on the beautiful dogma of pardon, on the mystery of incarnation and redemption. Take away this dogma and these mysteries, and we have left a Morality without a foundation—a Morality which never leads to sacrifice, a Morality incapable of curbing our passions.

Is the Morality of Philosophy sufficient without Faith?

No; for Philosophical Morality needs an efficacious sanction, and this sanction comes from belief in the reward of virtue, in the punishment of vice, and in the future life.

And what is this if not a dogma? Therefore, even Philosophical Morality must needs rest on dogmatical truth. Therefore, there is no Morality without Religion.

And this is why, in the present day, men talk of an *independent Morality*—a Morality separated from all religions. We even hear of a thing hitherto unknown—a *moral Crisis*. Men know not on what basis to construct Morality. Some even doubt whether such a thing exists. They affirm that the foundations of Morality cannot stand before criticism, that it has found them weak and false.

And why?

Because when Morality is separated from Faith, when Morality is separated from Religion, there is no longer one rule for all, no supreme authority which says to all, "*Thus must thou do.*"

Scherer said: "True and good Morality tends to the transcendental, to the absolute; it feels its necessity for resting on God."

After this, one would think that we ought to

return to *Religious Morality*, which is the true ; but alas, my brethren, it is just the contrary.

The Rationalists reject these conclusions, and denying the Faith, prefer discussing the possibility of a progressive Morality, evolutionistic, and ever-changing, whose authority is continually disputed and compromised by its own evolutions, and contrary to honest customs.

Therefore it is that, having lost the idea of that Morality which indicated the limits of virtue and vice, they lose also those powerful motives which lead men to do well and which keep them from doing evil. What probity can we expect from men who believe everything lawful, and who pacify their consciences by saying, "If God exist, He does not trouble Himself about our actions."

We hear to-day no other cry but that of the passions. The virtues of the day are virtues of appearance—civil virtues ; many are virtuous out of respect for man.

You know well that virtuous and vicious men may even resemble each other externally ; it is the heart which distinguishes between the man who does good for love of what is good, and he who does good to escape the censure of his fellow men.

And so, my brethren, the number of unbelievers

increases daily, and if among them there be one really honest man, "*albo signandus lapillo.*"

For which reason we meet with dishonesty in contracts, too little loyalty in commercial transactions, small fidelity in friendships, and still less in matrimony—no respect for honour and none for innocence; and if we do not pray to the Lord to have pity on us, I fear that this our *progress* will lead us back to barbarism.

XXIII.

HOPE.

Exordium.—The world, brethren, is full of flattering pleasures and seductions, but it is also the scene of poignant sorrows and overwhelming suffering. “Man liveth but a short time upon the earth and his life is full of misery”—“*Brevi vivens tempore repletur multis miseriis.*” This cry of Job’s is the cry of the whole human race. Scripture rightly calls the earth a “vale of tears,” and compares the days of man to those of the “hireling,” who eats at night the bread he has gained in the day through the sweat of his brow. Which of us has not had his share in this heritage of suffering, transmitted to us from generation to generation, and increased in every age by some fresh calamity? Alas, the first cry of man on entering the world is a wail, and with a groan he leaves it. From the cradle to the tomb life is but a brief path shaded by dark cypresses sown with thorns and bathed with tears; how many bitter disappointments, how many cruel illusions, how many sad separations, how many miseries!

Pain succeeds to pain as the days succeed one another. Youth has its secret sorrows, old age has its burden of grey hairs; neither the palace of the rich nor the hovel of the poor can escape from its laws, nor is the sentinel who watches at the foot of the throne able to protect the monarch from its approach. Like a legacy, the cry of pain has been handed down to us, by all men, and in all ages. From north to south, from east to west, from ocean islands to desert wastes, from populous cities to silent mountains we hear naught but groans and lamentations. It is the debt of man rising to Heaven. But is there no help, no remedy for all these evils? Yes, there is, there ought to be. And where? Shall we demand it at the hands of our companions in misfortune? But they can do nothing for us. They can only share our tears and ask us to console them in their turn. Shall we turn to science and philosophy? Science and philosophy are cold in the presence of grief, they have naught but words, beautiful and compassionate, if you will, but which leave the heart heavy and hopeless. O, leave us rather to our tears than to the hollow comfort of their theories!

Religion alone can lessen our griefs, bind up our wounds and mitigate our sorrows, because it alone (says Chateaubriand) has known how to make a virtue of Hope.

Christian Hope and Heaven; this is the true and only balsam for our wounds, the star in the night, the flower amid the ruins, which is able to afford strength and joy to afflicted souls.

This is what I propose to-day to speak of, its nature, its aim, and the sweetness of its consequences, and to show you how without it there is nothing for us but the despair of grief. Then listen to me courteously, for is it not all important for us, poor pilgrims on the road of life, to know, amid our strife and struggle, where to find the secret of strength and joy and consolation?

God has created man for two lives—the present and the future—the one visible, the other invisible; one corporeal, the other spiritual; one attached to earth, the other owing its existence entirely to Faith; one in our own hands, the other in those of Hope. Of these two lives, the first is the field, or agone,* open to all combatants, the other is the goal where the premium and the crown await us; the first is the voyage, the second is the port—one will endure but for an instant, the other knows neither age nor death.

Therefore it is that happiness is not to be sought for here; this life is not rest, but the

* The Agone of the ancient Romans was the enclosed space in which the wrestlers and gladiators fought, and public games were held.

way of preparation which leads to it; the sun is not the light, but only the dawn of light. S. Paul says that "every creature groaneth and travaileth in pain until now, waiting for the adoption of the sons of God."

Christian Hope carries our thoughts beyond this life on to a future existence, to that moment in which the thick veil shall fall, and in which the exile, stretching out his hands to the promised country, will be satisfied with the happiness so ardently desired, and the Christian, after having triumphed over the world and himself, shall finally receive the crown like the young soldier, who, having reached the walls of the besieged city through a path of fire and blood, seizes the banner and shouts Victory! With peace on her brow, serenity in her glance, a smile on her lips, Hope, that beautiful daughter of Heaven, comes and sits by the poor afflicted one, and like that heroic mother who, raising to Heaven her streaming eyes, encouraged her youngest born to die, she exhorts poor mortals by reminding them of the promised reward, and says: "Courage! thy brothers are already arrived in glory. They see you, they call you, they are waiting for you. Very soon you shall go to join them, and to reign with them. It is true you will have to pass through the thorns of this vale of tears, but

the end will be soon, and the end is Heaven ! It is true you will have to struggle against cruel enemies ; but the fruit will be sweet and the glory eternal in Heaven. It is true you will have to pass your life in the midst of sufferings, with the sword of death hanging over you, but Heaven will be the reward, and death will open to you the gates of Paradise." And with such words she re-animates our courage, re-awakens in us the sense of our destinies, excites our desires, fires our souls, and becomes to us the fiery chariot which transported Elijah and holds us suspended between earth and Heaven, time and eternity. There is an outcry in our days against the tendencies which Religion awakes in us through its hopes. They would that man should only think of earth, and of the things of the earth. It is folly, they say—it is folly, they write—to raise men's thoughts from earth to Heaven, to remove them from the present life to the future. Such mysticism should be left to monks and nuns. Selfish and narrow-minded language, we reply—language worthy of those who only believe what they can see and touch, and weigh and measure—language worthy of those who are sold to gold and silver. What do they pretend, those men who declare war with Heaven ? Have they never suffered or wept ? Have they never seen men die ?

Have they never experienced the insufficiency of earthly methods for the consolation of grief? Do they count it so small a thing that we must bathe this "cursed earth" with our tears, and bury all our hopes therein, that they would shut up our souls in a tomb which has no opening toward eternity? Shall not the poor prisoner, languishing in his horrid cell, be permitted to drag himself to the grated window, there to perceive a glimpse of heaven and breathe a breath of purer air? O, great God—great God! What would become of us without Hope? Who would give us strength to resist the persecutions of calumny, hatred, and tyranny, if Hope did not point to Christian justice as the avenger of oppressed and trampled virtue?

Who could sustain human weakness, when misery and suffering rain down upon some poor existence, if Hope did not hold out a promise of better days? Oh, let such renounce the Hope of Heaven! Let them sit down and grovel in the mire and dust of the earth. They excite my compassion, but with what right do they come to spread their doctrine in the world? With what right do they come to insult a people who work, who toil, who live by privation, by taking from them the only comfort they possess—the Hope of Heaven? O, brethren, to take away what can dry a tear, even though it be but an

illusion—mark me, an illusion—is often a barbarous cruelty. A young prisoner, to vary the monotony of his existence, became attached to a little spider, which visited him daily. He fed it, and took pleasure in its company, looking forward to its arrival; in fact, it became like a friend to him. One day the jailer perceived it, and crushed it to death with his foot. Poor Silvio—poor Silvio! Even this small consolation was grudged thee by that brutal monster. A spider is an insignificant animal—a nothing; but the action hurts us, and no one who has read this story or heard it told but says: “How cruel was that man.” But to take from the people, to take from the suffering the Hope of Heaven, is to take from man his last crust, to take from the drowning man his last plank of safety, and to push him down into the abyss of desperation. It is as though you would push a man back who, having fallen into a roaring torrent, is clinging to some neighbouring shrub for safety. To say to a man, “Thou weepest, and thou art in pain, be comforted, after the tomb there is nothing,” is unheard of cruelty. No! This is not our condition on earth. We are like the exile who sighs for his country. The day of our exile will end, the chains will be broken which hold our soul prisoner, and we, tired of this lie, which calls

itself human happiness, may comfort ourselves with a vision of Heaven, and rest in a sure harbour after the tempest. Poor brethren! You suffer hunger, thirst, nakedness, and you, poor mothers, surrounded by a multitude of babes, who ask you for bread and you have only tears, and for clothing, and you have only caresses and kisses,—raise your eyes to Heaven, there is your country and your kingdom, and abundant compensation. The days of separation are numbered, a little while and your hovels will be changed into radiant dwellings and gilded thrones, and your tears, gathered up with love by the angels, will add new gems to the crown of your immortal life. Before long, God Himself will invite you to sit at His table amid the effulgent splendours of Heaven. There will be no more poverty, no more provocations, no abandon, no deception; God will receive us in His arms, and we shall be inebriated with the pure joys of our Father's House. O, incomprehensible joy, how happy we shall be! O, truth—truth! What ecstasies of sweetness shall we not experience in our poor minds so eager for knowledge! O, beauty, ever old, yet ever new! With what transports will my heart exult when it clasps thee in an eternal embrace! O, bright day, when shall I see thee? What hindereth me from seeing my God? Show

me, O show me the object of my desires, and of my hopes; then only shall I be content, then only shall I be happy. But on what does it rest, this beautiful and sweetest of Hopes? Upon a foundation that cannot be shaken—the Cross of Jesus. Hear; Jesus was seated one day on the summit of a hill to teach the people; all at once He looked down upon the earth, and, seeing it full of tears and covered with unfortunates, exclaimed, “Blessed are the poor, blessed are those that weep, blessed are those that are persecuted.” What sayest thou, O Lord? Blessed are the poor, blessed are they that weep, blessed are they that are persecuted? But is not this a cruel irony? Didst Thou not know the privations of poverty, the bitterness of tears? Hast Thou not experienced the torments of persecution? Why, therefore, dost Thou call them blessed? *Quoniam ipsorum est regnum cælorum!* For of them is the Kingdom of Heaven. Do you hear? It is Jesus, Lord and Master of Heaven, who gives it to those who weep and suffer. And Jesus Christ confirms His words from the heights of Calvary. Before He dies He passes in revision the ages past and future, sees their griefs, and pitying poor humanity, exclaims: I have compassion on the multitude—“*Omnis dolor irruat in me.*” “Let all the suffering fall on me.” Yes,

all their pains of body and mind fall upon Him, for He has consented to suffer for humanity and Himself to expiate their sins, and behold, "I show you a mystery"—"*Ecce mysterium vobis dico*," in measure as they fall on Him, they leave in Him their bitterness, they imbibe His blood, and return to men tempered with Divine comfort that they may work in man the effect they have worked in Jesus. S. Paul says: "While man suffers, God is reconciled to him; while man suffers, God is in him; and this is why," says the great apostle, "those whom God has predestinated, those whom He looks upon with predilection, must be made conformable to His ends, must resemble Christ and carry His Cross, in order to wear with Him a crown of glory." Jesus Christ does not promise enjoyment to His disciples, but says to them: "Take up your cross and follow me." For which reason S. Paul seeks everywhere the cross, and invites the faithful to seek it, this dear mystery of our Hope, which is to serve us as a guide in this life of suffering, and bring us into the immensity of future glory. This is the foundation of our Hope, and before this Hope shall fail, Jesus Christ must cease to be God, and His words to be true. Now, my brethren, if this Hope enter into the breast of a man who suffers, who can say what strength,

what consolation, what joy it will bring him? If the Hope of an uncertain and often fallacious gain sustains the poor mariner amid treacherous seas, if the Hope of an uncertain harvest renders the peasant's burden light during rigorous winters, or ardent summers, if that great man, who left traces of his genius everywhere, could animate his soldiers for long and painful marches by showing them the glory of bygone generations and their own future expectations, what may not Hope do, which is founded, not on the word of many, but on the word of God—the Hope of eternal and infinite benefits, a Hope not of passing pleasures, but of joys celestial and eternal?

Brethren, the history of Hope is the history of heroic facts and of sublime glory! See those millions of martyrs in the midst of their tortures? The executioners turn pale and tremble. And they? They smile amid grief; open their lips to prayer, pray for tyrants, pray even for their executioners. Do you see in the desert those men attenuated by long fastings and prolonged watchings? No cloud on their face, no tear in their eye, no complaint on their lips! And those young girls cloistered within the holy Ark of Religion; those virgins who open their arms to the Cross, and astonish the world with the heroism

of their exclamation : “ O, let us either suffer or die,” or further still, in the words of the Florentine Saint : “ Let me not die, but rather let me suffer.”* Others speak of balls, of theatres, of evening parties and pleasures ; they smile at these poor joys, and, showing their woollen garment, speak to you of the suffering poor, and say that the pleasures of Heaven are sufficient for them. This is the secret of their holy impulses, and as S. Paul says, “ They see Heaven opened, kiss their chains, and rejoice.” “ Heaven is my country ; I hope soon to go to it ! ” is the cry of the Saints. Ignatius, when he contemplated Heaven, said, “ O, how mean my country seems compared with Paradise ! ” And my Saint, Francesco d’Assisi, the Patriarch of the poor, cried one day, looking up to Heaven in an ecstasy of love : “ It is so beautiful that every trouble is a delight to me in the expectation of such happiness.” Such are, my friends, the results of Hope. The man who hopes approaches God. When you would picture him oppressed and crushed with grief, if he embraces Christian Hope he becomes strong as a God. It is true that he who hopes suffers as well as he who does not hope. But what a difference ! The man who hopes sees in his sufferings a way to expiate his faults—a

* Saint Theresa.

means of purifying his own virtues and making them resemble those of Christ; in a word, he sees in those sufferings a way to gain Heaven. If he speak, his words are those of his Lord agonizing in Gethsemane: "Father, remove this cup from Me, yet not My will, but Thine be done." The other, on the contrary, who has no Hope, bears impressed upon his forehead the traces of profound grief. His features have a fearful expression; he is in a state bordering on despair. If he speak, his words sound like blasphemy and malediction. The first inspires sympathy, the second horror!

My brethren, how can it be otherwise! He who hopes for nothing beyond the tomb, he who does not hope in Heaven, reflects on the good things he has lost, feels the evils which oppress him, and curses God who chastises him, and the men who are the instruments of the Divine chastisement. He drags on a desolate and mournful life, which inclines him to despair, and sometimes to suicide. Both suffer; but what a difference between the resigned lamentations of the one and the desperate cries of the other. Ah! yes, the history of Hope is our history. It goes back to Calvary. Mark that man on Christ's right hand. He is a man who hopes! Before Hope entered his heart he blasphemed and cursed; but

scarcely has Hope entered into his soul than his words are calm, and his countenance lighted up with a celestial radiance. He turns to Jesus, and says, "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy Kingdom." And Jesus answered him: "To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." The gladiator, passing before the throne of Cæsar, salutes him with the enforced ceremonial: "*Ave Cæsar, morituri te salutant!*" "Hail, Cæsar, I die saluting thee." The martyr Ignatius invokes Jesus, his Hope, his Life! The combat commences; the gladiator is wounded, and raging with anger, continues to fight, and falls; and in falling sees around him, hemming him in, that immense concourse of the Roman people, recalls his own distant country, his wife, his sons, his aged parents, and dies cursing and blaspheming. But Ignatius descends into the arena with the peace of Heaven upon his brow, a smile on his lips, and says to his followers: "Pray not that the beasts be merciful toward me; I know what I need, which is to go quickly to Heaven to enjoy Jesus. I am the wheat, which must be ground by the teeth of the wild beasts in order to become bread for God's altar." And when he heard the roar of the wild beasts, he said, "Come, come and tear me; I fear ye not." They come, tear him and leave him swimming in his blood. His dying

eyes seek Heaven, but there is no despair in them. Heaven is his country. He hopes and prays that his blood may fall like rain upon this city of Rome as a benediction. He hopes, and therefore dies blessing, and dies praying. And the angels carry him to Heaven.

Behold, friends, behold the fruits of Hope ! Nor need we go to seek it in the remoter pages of history. Is it not ever before our eyes ? Ask those angels who call themselves Sisters of Charity ; ask them what they do in the midst of the poor and distressed ? They will tell you that they seek to instil Hope in their minds, for when Hope has entered in, calm and resignation are sure to follow. Hope enters into the hovel of the poor, and calms his sorrow in the midst of privations and miseries ; Hope descends to the damp cell of the prisoner, and, reminding him of the liberty of his soul, preserves him from despair.

Hope sits beside the poor condemned man whom society rejects after having sentenced him, and causes a ray of serenity and peace to shine upon him. Hope sits by the bedside of the sick and the dying, and here it displays all its hidden consolations. Let the modern scientists come forward—they who boast of having caused the progress of science, but who have not learnt the art of consoling humanity. Let these approach

the sick man's bed. He is struggling against a malady which by slow degrees is consuming his life. His abode is mean and miserable ; there is no house and no creature near the poor pilgrim, who is gradually sinking into the tomb. But it is not here that you will meet those who do not believe in Heaven. They would not dare to repeat in such a place their pompous words. The most they do is to give some pecuniary relief, while they turn their eyes another way. But money is not enough to console that wretched man. And what can they say to comfort his soul? "I pity you, poor man ; and all the more, because I also have suffered."

Good words, but insufficient to relieve his anguish. Or they will say : "Do not dwell upon your pains ; put them away from you ;" or "You must be patient." "Patient !" answers that afflicted soul, "but it is ten, twenty, thirty years that I have been patient, that I have begged, and suffered, and prayed." And what can patience do, unless it be accompanied by the Hope of an eternal recompense, by the Hope of Heaven? "I understand," he says, "you would that the victim, instead of struggling and complaining amid his tortures, should suffocate his cries ; that he should offer his throat to the knife without a word. *Your patience* is an insult to my misery."

“Suffer and die” is your motto; and the only and supreme consolation of human science. O, let us come, let us draw near the ministers of Jesus Christ to comfort and deliver the soul which believes in Jesus, and loves God. We will put the cross into his cold hands, and lay it upon his cold heart and say to him: “Hope, my son, in the Lord, hope in His grace, hope in His glory; He is about to crown thee.”

Courage, my brother; must not the leaf fall that the branch may grow green? Must not the grain fall in the furrow that it may germinate in the spring? Do we not know that if this house of clay fall we have another, not made with hands, but built for us by God, to last eternally? Here we have no permanent dwelling; but yet some short day, some short hour of pain, and this mortality will be changed for immortality. And thou wilt be there, united to the Saints, united to thy parents there, whence is banished every tear and every grief, and wilt exclaim: “The sufferings of this earth did not merit so much glory; the tribulations of the world did not merit so great a reward.” And at these words the poor man, who had begun to despair in his anguish, grows calm again; his face becomes radiant with a heavenly light, and he exclaims: “Thank you! O, I thank you! You have done

me so much good!" And, turning to his wife and children, who are weeping round his bed, he says: "Weep no more—weep no more; I die, it is true, but I am happy; for it is not an eternal adieu that I give you, but rather a rendezvous; for we shall meet again in Heaven." And, pressing his lips upon the wounds of Jesus, he exhales his last sigh and dies in peace. Let us visit yet another spectacle of grief. Death has struck down its victim who lies before us, colourless, motionless, and lifeless. She is a bride, a tenderly-loved bride; it seemed to you when you took her to your arms as though the tie were made for ever; but on a sudden it is broken, grief has followed quickly on your joy. Or is it a mother? one you have hitherto called your sublime mother? or a son or a daughter upon whom you have placed all your hopes? Call those who do not believe in Heaven; let them stand in the presence of this corpse, in the sight of those sacred lineaments which bear the impress of eternity. Do they dare to fix their eyes on those inanimate remains? And what does their science say to them? Shall their adieux have been eternal? Have they loved only a handful of dust? "O, mother! my mother!" they say, "I was unable to receive thy last blessing; I did not hear thy last words, and am I never to see thee

again? This love, which still exists in me, is it but a shadow, a love for a nullity? And thou, O, my mother! art thou gone for ever?" O, cruel men, depart from me, together with your doctrine. Either you have never loved, or in those moments of extremest grief you must feel desperate. Go, go, break your heads and your hearts against the cold marble of the tomb. It will answer you nothing. You have believed in nothing, and in nothing will be your consolation. But we, O, brethren, we who believe, let us console ourselves. We shall see our dear ones again. O, poor orphans! O, forsaken mothers! O, desolate widows! I see and I understand your grief. Death, cruel death has come, has broken up everything; there is no longer a heart which responds to the beating of your heart—only solitude and silence. I see you weeping over a tomb for ever closed. What, said I? For ever? Ah, no! O, Catholic Hope, beautiful daughter of God, come and say to the child, who, with bursting heart, presses her brow on the cold stone which covers the bones of her mother, tell her her mother is not there; tell the widow her husband is not there; tell the mother her son is not there. No, they are in Heaven; they see us, they are waiting for us, they are calling us; and before long we shall go to meet them, and to live with them in the bosom of infinite beatitude.

There we shall meet them in glory; we shall recognize them among the elect, for in Heaven man does not lose his personality. Holy Catholic Hope! This it is which gives us strength to suffer to-day, and to-morrow gives us glory. At these words the funereal cloud disappears, an ineffable sweetness pervades the mind, raises, yea, ravishes and transports it into tranquil regions, where the gloomy horrors of the grave are unknown, and we behold no longer the miserable remains of humanity, but a tenderly-loved being, crowned with light. Dear Hope, beautiful daughter of Heaven; Hope, comforter of the afflicted; Hope, companion of the exile; Hope, guardian of the tomb, ah, forsake us not! Be ever the light of our hearts, the guide of our steps, the model for our actions, so that after having endured with resignation the troubles of this life, we may merit the crown in that better one, which Thou showest us as the end and object of our journey.

Peroration.—Brethren, in the Vatican is a picture which forms the admiration of all who behold it, the *Transfiguration*, painted by Raphael d'Urbino. This picture contains a practical teaching in which all my sermon may be summed up. Listen. In the lower part is depicted a scene from the Gospels, the youth possessed by a devil.

The father holds him amid his convulsions. His limbs are violently distorted, his eyes roll wildly in their orbits, his countenance wears a terrible expression. Near him, on her knees, is a beautiful woman, whose attitude bespeaks both horror and fear. The disciples of Jesus, those who are not with Him on Mount Tabor, are gazing with an expression of impotence on the awful scene. And the multitude is scattered here and there, wondering and terrified, and without power to help him. This is the image of our life. Why? What does this scene represent? A scene of grief without consolation, a scene of desperate pain. And what is human life but a woof of mental griefs, of heart griefs, without consolation and without comfort? And remark, Jesus Christ is not present; He is on Tabor. No one thinks of Him, no one asks or seeks for Him. But, no; I am wrong, and this is a wonderful point in the picture. To the left you see a man whose hand is raised toward Mount Tabor, as though he would say to that multitude, to that father, to that mother, "Look, above is a powerful Being, a God; call Him, invoke Him, and you will have consolation, and this child will be cured." This is a deeply interesting incident; a man points out Jesus on Mount Tabor, and no one expects it, neither father nor mother, nor

anyone. Brethren, does not the same thing happen also in our life? Who thinks of Heaven, who thinks of Paradise, who talks of them? And when the Minister of Jesus Christ, seeing his brethren suffer, says, "Be comforted, for Heaven is your country," why not listen to his words? But there is another feature in the picture which must not be forgotten—if Jesus Christ be not present another power is, and a tyrannical one. And who is this, if not the devil? Do I exaggerate in saying that the same thing happens in life? What happens in the world when the hope of Heaven is banished from it? What do we find in a soul which no longer hopes in God and Paradise? We find a demon, the most terrible of demons, the demon of despair! A revolver, poison, or drowning is the end of many a miserable life. This explains, O, brethren, why suicide, which formerly was scarcely known in our country, is now of such frequent occurrence, carrying misery and desolation into families and becoming the dread of society. O, what harm have they not done, who have deprived the world, and especially the poor, of its only comfort, the Hope of Heaven. My friends, would you have any comfort in your troubles, would you escape from the clutches of despair? Awaken your hopes in that Heaven which is always open over your heads. Yes,

brethren, when we have lost all, father, mother, friends, when all that is dear to us is gone, when no hand any longer protects us, no glance of affection awaits us, no heart beats in unison with ours, when everything seems to have conspired against us, and we feel ourselves alone like exiles in a foreign land, Heaven is always open above us, God hears our voice, our sighs, and our prayers. He sends us His consoling angel, as to Jesus in Gethsemane, to sustain us in our agony, who places us at the foot of the Cross and confronts us with these words. Know that the disciple cannot be above his Master, the Master has suffered so much that the disciple must suffer a little. Remember that Jesus said, "Blessed are they that suffer, blessed are they that weep, blessed are they that are persecuted, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven." Courage, brethren, courage; this life is only a brief pilgrimage, a short exile; after exile comes the country. O, what a sweet promise! *Lactatus sum, lactatus sum!* Yes, we shall go one day to the House of our Heavenly Father! Courage, friends; you weep, but not alone. God counts your tears and is waiting to dry them Himself. *Absterge Deus omnes lacrymas ex oculis eorum.* Courage, brethren, we are on the path of suffering, but this is the very path to Heaven, there is no other.

O, curse not, blaspheme not ; I know how you suffer, I see your griefs and compassionate you, but reflect that all is fleeting, all is passing, it endureth but for a moment. Think that from morn till eve is the measure of a life, and that after our wanderings we shall go home. Raise, O brethren, raise your eyes on high, look at the heavens ; you need not say with Luther, “ Heaven is beautiful, but it is not for me,” but “ Heaven is beautiful, and it is for me.” Yes, yes, for you ! And if you have there a father, a mother, a brother, a sister, a son, or a friend, they see you, they are waiting for you and praying for you. Yet a step, and you will be there. One more effort and you will have won. A little more suffering and you will be wafted into an ocean of delights.

XXIV.

THE SUPERNATURAL.

Exordium.—Since Christianity began her existence, the question of the relations between Reason and Faith, between Science and Religion, has been continually brought forward. But until the eighteenth century our enemies never dared to affirm an absolute incompatibility between the two powers.

Reason accused Faith, now on this point and now on that, of dogma or morality, but never on the ground of its *supernatural* character, or because of its being *supernatural*.

But modern Science gives itself out as the expression of a stronger and more manly power, which is to deliver the people from the darkness of the primeval ages, and from the fetters of Revelation. Christian Apologists have not been wanting in their efforts to repulse similar attacks.

The simplest way is to place the existence of the *supernatural* before us as a fact, and afterward its proofs and testimony as so many other facts.

Religion invites her adversaries to the cradle of the Supernatural—that is, to Christ—and says to them in the language of Science and Criticism, “Observe His origin, observe His history, never has man spoken as this Man, never has such apparent weakness changed into such mighty strength as in Christianity.” Are we not constrained to admit that this is a solitary case in the annals of the world, that it is a fact beyond all natural conditions, in a word, that it is a supernatural fact? Why, then, will ye not believe? But the Rationalists do not lack formulas for rejecting our belief, and these formulas are axioms which they lay down without proving them. The first of these formulas, embracing all the rest, is that they do not admit of the supernatural, because it is not compatible with the scientific spirit. They have also another formula, which says: “The supernatural is absurd, and, therefore, our Faith also is absurd.” Others say that the supernatural cannot be proved by the technical processes of their methods, and that, therefore, a man cannot believe without derogating from his own dignity, while others affirm that it is an obstacle in the way of liberty of thought, and an act of servitude. And all agree that Faith was only the provisional state of human infancy, while Science is the definitive state of

adult mankind. My brethren, I would examine this morning all of these formulæ and see what each contains, for God will not allow of any compromise of human dignity through our sincerity in believing, nor decadence of Faith, nor any blemish on the honour of those who have given their name to the Gospel. Because the lower we, as believers, consent to bow our heads before God, the higher we will hold them before men. We have learned of our forefathers to be rather martyrs than slaves; we have learnt that of all servitudes, that which we most dread is that which would subject our intelligence.

Brethren, the Rationalists say we do not admit the *supernatural*, because it is incompatible with the scientific spirit. But why is it incompatible with the scientific spirit? "That is easy to understand," they reply. "You are predisposed, and it would be puerile to try to introduce the light into the recesses of your belief. Your soul is like the eye, which, when affected by a certain malady, cannot distinguish colours." But, I reply, how can you be sure that you are not yourselves affected by an opposite malady? If I can prove that in the recesses of your mind there exists negation in the state of axiom, negation in the state of preconceived opinion,

your condition is no better than ours, and, therefore, you ought to submit yourself to it with the same sincerity, with the same logic, and with the same truthfulness. And I affirm that if at the bottom of our minds there is faith in the supernatural, at the bottom of yours there is absolute negation of the supernatural. I open one of your learned books, and I perceive that this is the turning point of your legendary theory concerning Gospel history: "The supernatural is a contradiction, the supernatural is impossible." But is this proved? Is it evident? You want to impose it on us as an axiom; you tell us magisterially that the non-existence of the supernatural is not the result of reasoning, but of the totality of Modern Science, and then claim for your negation the august protection of Science and Criticism. Not that Science and Criticism have attempted to demonstrate it, but because, in the nineteenth century, it is a law of history and philosophy that there is no mystery of Faith which is not supernatural. This is the password, and this password is called criticism. Now since your savants confess that this password is a principle which it is not necessary to prove, we may condemn the scorn with which they regard us. The liberty and independence of which they boast is only the right they arrogate

to themselves for supposing what they **cannot** prove.

If we are the slaves of Faith, they are the slaves of Unbelief; if we see anything through our dogma, they see everything through theirs, which is, that the supernatural is impossible. Our condition, therefore, academically speaking, is the same. Thus, if there were no compatibility between the scientific spirit and the spirit of the Faith, the faithful would still be as free and as logical as the rationalistic servants of the spirit of Science. The spirit of Science! A solemn term by no means unfamiliar to the ears of our Faith, for have we not eighteen centuries to look back upon, during which men like Origen, Augustine, Thomas, Anselm, Bacon, and Leibnitz have shown the compatibility of Faith with the Spirit of Science. But we must know first of what Science. The Rationalists, it is true, speak of their Science; let us see what that is. We know that they call it criticism. S. Thomas says that Science is *positive knowledge*, deducted from principles evident in themselves, and which are, as it were, the generators of Science. Science is an edifice, but every edifice needs a foundation, and in Science these foundations are the positive principles upon which it is based.

We have, therefore, a right to ask them upon what

principles they base their knowledge which they call criticism, and we have seen what these are; they confess that their starting point is the negation of the supernatural, as to which they say, with Rénan: "Science considers this question as solved." And this, because they consider it a self-evident axiom. They must, however, allow that even in the nineteenth century the proofs of the supernatural, even supposing them questionable, make an impression on serious minds, and that belief in the supernatural may become the basis of reasoned convictions founded on motives, not futile, but firm. Limiting ourselves to this minimum, how shall we explain the ease with which they ridicule those who believe in the supernatural order?

To treat one's adversaries, like they do, as impostors, ignoramuses, and fools, is neither a proof of good taste nor of valid argument. That part of humanity which they scornfully call "*foolish*" will easily console themselves, when they find the learned ones of the other party so unreasonable. And is it not unreasonable to proclaim a knowledge whose principles are neither evident nor proved? The supernatural now reckons nineteen centuries, and if we may not here call to our aid the argument of prescription, we must not forget that other argument—

Auctoris est probare. It is the part of the plaintiff to furnish the proofs. It is for him to prove that the supernatural is not possible. But they have not been able to do it; they have not done it, and will not ever do it; their methods are neither in accordance with reason nor justice. Therefore, instead of saying that there is absolute incompatibility between the *supernatural* and scientific *truth*, they ought to say that the supernatural is contrary to their science. This antithesis would be more or less flattering to them and less dangerous for us.

We need never be disturbed if they accuse us of servility, for they themselves are the slaves of the negation of the supernatural. Nor should we be angry if they charge us with the inferiority of our knowledge, because the reproof proceeds from those whose knowledge is not true knowledge. Nor should we be angry if they discuss our faith, for the science of the believer is a *reasonable* science.

“Let your homage be reasonable,” said S. Paul. “Seek,” said S. Augustine, “the reason of your faith.”

Therefore it is that we have always invited rationalism to descend on the true ground of the question, “Is the supernatural possible or not?” Analyze it, resolve it into its first elements, see if

truly there be contradiction between the ideas that it contains and the scientific spirit. This is what we want. An exact, sincere, and loyal research of truth. But what, instead, does rationalism do? It refuses to accept the supernatural principle of the Church, it declines to fight it out loyally, or to contemplate it in its conception as approaching more or less nearly to truth; it chooses rather to combat it as a phantasm, to the injury of the Church, like S. Augustine, who says, "I made of the Church a phantasm, and wrestled with it." But we disdain their objections because the supernatural possesses, and has possessed in all time, the suffrage of the greatest men, and of the choicest spirits. They say with Rénan that they do not wish to have to do with theologians and their polemics.

But let us descend to their particular formulas. The boldest among them say that the *supernatural* is *absurd*. But is there no contradiction between the Finite and the Infinite? Admitted the existence of these two, we have yet to explain how they act relatively to each other, how the Finite has proceeded from the Infinite, how it stays itself on the Infinite, and remains united to it. If the supernatural order of things is only a completer manifestation of God, we can no more establish a contradiction between Christ and the

supernatural, than we can arrest the progress of an arithmetical progression. Add to this revelation another revelation, and where is the absurdity? But, father, Science does not heed these things, it does not care about Faith; Science has its object, which is composed of phenomena, natural laws, causes and effects. The botanist makes a collection of plants, the mineralogist of stones, the entomologist of insects, the anatomist studies corpses, the politician studies the means of giving happiness to the people—they neither deny nor affirm the supernatural, they ignore it.

Then, brethren, must we not allow that their science is somewhat short-sighted? In their several specialities have they never encountered the presence of God? Physical laws are insufficient to explain all phenomena. There are questions of origin and final causes which cannot be cast aside without doing violence to the Church, and which are difficult to explain without the light of Faith. But, father, your supernatural system cannot be proved by the usual processes, or by the usual methods, therefore it is not scientific.

Brethren, in the supernatural we must distinguish two things: the idea and the fact; it may be regarded under two points of view, it is therefore comprehensible and scientific. There is

a secret link between the things of the superior and inferior world, and a link which genius is able to discover. In this way was formed the grand philosophy of the scholastic fathers, which rests entirely upon the agreement of logical and supernatural order. And in the supernatural there exists a great fact, and it is by this above all things, that it is scientific.

The existence of Jesus Christ can be proved as the existence of Alexander, of Cæsar, and of Napoleon. His divinity, according to the critics, belongs to theology. But Jesus Christ may be discussed like Zoroaster, like Confucius, like Mahomet. His Gospel is free as are other writings, it was first transcribed upon parchments, afterward translated into all spoken languages and disseminated in millions of copies in all parts of the universe. The Gospel contains prophecies, and these prophecies are composed of previsions which have been confirmed by fulfilment. The Gospel contains the account of miracles, and a miracle is a fact composed of two facts taking place in two different orders, one natural, the other supernatural, but they are each facts. And what do we require more sensible? Does not history therefore instruct the Rationalists! Let Science interrogate the dust, make the dead speak, the stones of palaces, the

marble of temples ; the supernatural fears nothing, but let them not pretend that it is not scientific.

And are we to take seriously the accusation that the supernatural is contrary to the liberty of the mind? Brethren, the first law of the human spirit, indeed the essence of the human spirit, is liberty. The human mind is essentially free, nor sword, nor eloquence, can ever force it. It knows no bounds but *truth*, but these bounds do not restrict its liberty, do not injure, but rather raise and confirm it, for liberty was only given to man that he might find *truth*. Why then should Faith venture itself against that beautiful and sublime privilege of man which is called Liberty? Our Faith is essentially free, it everywhere presents a character of spontaneity and personal freedom of will, it is not a belief extorted from us by violence; the scimitar may make Mahometans, but it could never make Christians; nor can moral violence have any power over our convictions.

In fact, what does the priest say when you bring your child to the gates of the church? He asks, "Will you be baptised?" And when you are about to receive Jesus, when you have reached the age of reason, the priest asks, "Will you ratify the promises made for you at your baptism?" And when Faith has entered freely

into a mind, is there any external power which can drive it thence? My brethren, Faith is the free adhesion of the will, it is Liberty linked to Truth. How then can it be called a servitude? Is a man a slave, is he a servant, because he binds himself never to say, never to do, anything contrary to honesty or honour!

O, brethren, our Faith not only assures us liberty, but widens its horizon and lends the spirit wings to fly to it.

In our day men are not believers because the free-thinker is held up as a conquest of the modern mind. O, how many free-thinkers there are in our day, of all conditions and ages. A boy of nine years old on being asked his religion, replies, unhesitatingly, "I am a free-thinker." "I am a free-thinker," repeats the woman who has left off religious practices. And soon, brethren, thanks to modern education, they will say with pride, "Here we are, free-thinkers everywhere, even in your churches." Awaiting this epoch, let us see if they are what they say they are. To be *free-thinkers* it is necessary first of all that they should be "*thinkers*." Let us leave the ridiculous babe. Let us leave the frivolous woman. In fact, about what does she concern herself? Does she study the great metaphysical and theological questions which are the subjects of discussion of

the real thinkers? Does she study Plato, Aristotle, and the other great philosophers? No; she studies toilette, fashion, adventures more or less honest, the last piece of music; she thinks of soirées, balls, and between the reading of a romance and a journal of modes, declares herself a free-thinker! I spare her, and do not say publicly what she is, but my heart knows it. But to speak of men who are accustomed to reflection. Where shall we find these thinkers? Is he a thinker, that poor workman occupied from morning till evening in gaining bread for himself and his children? It is true that in the present day workmen read the papers, and we know how the papers think and how they make others think! And is he a thinker, that fashionable youth who spends his time in clubs and cafés and in other places of amusement? Is he a thinker, that political man who is always occupied with votes, elections, the preservation and the fall of ministers? But where shall we find the man who seriously raises his mind into the regions of thought? But let us suppose them thinkers, are they really *free*-thinkers? You must not accuse them to the contrary. "I am a free-thinker," cries out the youth, "because I only depend upon myself." On yourself; but do you know who you are yourself? I will tell you. Yourself is your

century, your family, your school, the society to which you belong, the daily paper in which you buy your thought ready made for five centimes. This thought, born of servitude, you call liberty. It is faith which breaks the chains of this servitude and opens new horizons to men's minds.

Two youths were completing their studies together in a foreign city. One of these, flattered by the pompous title of free-thinker, denies the Faith of his fathers in order to be free to know more. One day the other, who had remained a believer in the old Faith, meets him, and says: "Now that thou art become a free-thinker, what hast thou gained? Tell me in what the flight of your intelligence has surpassed mine. Behold the world and Nature; here are the heavens, and the earth, the land, the mountains, and the sea. What do you see that I cannot see also?" It is true that Laplace, who called himself an Atheist, knew how to explain the wonders of Nature, but if the illustrious Father Secchi had been there to answer him, he would probably have explained them still better. Let us proceed, and penetrate into the world of mind; let us consider God, the true and the beautiful. Have not our great metaphysicians penetrated these grand ideas as well as your philosophers? What do yours see

that ours saw not? Not long ago one read in a review—Two young men presented themselves to that incomparable angel of goodness, the late Père Lacordaire, and told him that they had discovered the non-existence of God, and were ready to argue it out with invincible arguments. Lacordaire listened to them patiently, and then said: “Take this book; the old monk who wrote it had better arguments against God than you have.” The book was the *Summa* of S. Thomas. Those young men opened the book and read in the first lines: “*Videtur quod Deus non sit*”—“It seems that God is not.” They were astonished, but Lacordaire said to them: “Read on,” and they continued, “*Sed contra est*”—“But against these objections behold the proofs.” They were confounded, and, going away, became convinced.

Now let us go still farther, let us go still higher; but no, you cannot come, you must remain below, while I go beyond; your eye does not see any farther, but I see. And why? Because my faith discovers to me a new world. You say that this new world is a new stumbling-block to the flight of our thoughts; you say it is an obstacle to the liberty of our minds. Yes, our Faith is an obstacle to the flight of our thoughts as America discovered by Christopher Columbus was an obstacle to the passage of his ships, as the

planets discovered by Leverrière are an obstacle to the researches of astronomers in the ethereal regions. Faith is an obstacle to the liberty of our minds, as the lighthouse which stands there on the sea-shore is an obstacle to the vessel imperilled in a stormy ocean, or as the iron rails of the tramway to the engine that passes over them.

You know, brethren, what happened two years since. A train left the Roman station, and just as it was about to enter the station of Panicale—through a mistake of the guard—the engine left the rails. The engine was free, but what occurred through its freedom? The overthrow and complete destruction of the carriages and two unhappy victims. And this, brethren, this is what free reasoning brings without the lights of the Faith; it brings ruin on itself, and prepares the ruin of the country and of society.

Peroration.—Brethren, what must we think of the free-thinkers and their common conclusion? They say: “Faith is provisional, Science is definitive. Faith holds the place of Science for children and during the infancy of a nation, while Science takes the place of Faith in adults, and in nations which consider themselves adult.” Brethren, I am curious to know when humanity ceases to be childish and becomes adult

You know that among the ancient Romans, when the child left off the *pretesta* and took the *Toga Virile*, there were always great fêtes in families, therefore there ought to be the same when humanity accomplishes this ceremonial.

But, brethren, I fear that this festive moment is now that chosen by the modern free-thinker! It is too late, brethren, it is too late, to draw a line between Religion and Philosophy, because our Religion, and especially Christianity, is peopled with great men who, according to this objection, would belong to the infancy of the human race, would have lived in a spontaneous Faith, believing in poetic symbols, only capable of satisfying infantine faculties. Those sublime men, who bear the names of Augustine, Thomas, Albertus Magnus, Copernicus, Kepler, Galileo, where would they be? If they were not thinkers, who are? Voltaire alone, and those who hold his tenets! These are the lucubrations seriously held in our schools, and in the midst of our youth, which would surely excite our laughter if our pity did not induce us rather to weep. We know that children show a tendency to belief, an instinctive and irresistible tendency, which proves that Faith is innate, that it is a necessity. We know also that it is a tendency easily subverted, which needs regulation and direction; but must we, therefore,

conclude that Faith is only a provisional state, which ought to be suppressed ?

O, brethren, this need which we have of believing, this happiness in flying from error, evidently proves that it is a divine instinct imparted to man, not only as a supreme benefit, but also a necessity.

And this tendency to believe in the marvellous, observable in children and in the infancy of nations, shows us that Faith in the supernatural needs illumination, guidance, and direction, and an authority superior to all the uncertainties of human reason.

All the superstitions and imaginations, all the falsely supernatural ideas which have vanished before the lights of Science, prove that our Religion has acquired yet another title to the gratitude of human kind, for it is our Faith which has civilized the people and driven away error. It is our Faith which has chased away the false supernatural and has brought in the true, not only for individuals, but for nations.

I challenge the free-thinker to find a single point wanting in our Truth, or in our Faith, which is the same as it was in the beginning, nineteen centuries ago. See, in fact, our creed. Behold it intact, amid the mobility of men and things, and yet it is not shut up in the recesses of a temple,

nor enveloped in swathing bands like the Egyptian mummies: it is sung by all nations, and shines out like the sun in a pure and serene sky. Let the free-thinkers find a truth pure as our Faith, which a truceless struggle of eighteen centuries has not been able to pale in one of its rays. The conflict between Faith and Science must always exist, and from time to time someone arises who pretends to have conquered the Faith, but the proofs are wanting. You will understand this better by the following fact: Not many years since an American professor, William Grant, published a book, to which he gave the pompous title of "The Story of the Conflicts between Science and Revelation." Taken in by the title, the free-thinkers made a great success of the book, and crushed our dogmas. Throughout the whole work every divine revelation is shown to be contrary to the development of ideas and the progress of mankind, and it pretends to show that Roman Catholicism and Science acknowledge their incompatibility, and that true Science must be made out of human nature alone.

Well, brethren, not many years have passed, and the book of the learned American is gone to join a host of others in the necropolis of free-thought, and our dogmas are what they were and what they will be to the end of ages.

XXV.

SUNDAY REST.

Exordium.—Brethren, in the first pages of Holy Writ, we read that God “rested from His work” after the sixth day. Now rest was not a necessity for the Omnipotent Creator; it was only a lesson—to teach us that, while condemning man to labour, He imposed on him at the same time the obligation of the non-abuse of the same. Blessed teaching, which raises man’s dignity to the level of God’s greatness! It is because God worked for six days, and rested on the seventh, that we are to do likewise; we are, therefore, to resemble God as workers, and to resemble Him also by resting from our labours. So our life becomes a perpetual commemoration of the Creation, and our activity an image of the activity of God. But, sad reflection, man who seeks rest with such avidity when denied him, refuses it when enjoined on him by God; and so great is the perversity of human nature, that he rejects it, even when presented to him under the aspect of honest enjoyment! See how universally the Sunday is profaned!

Instead of a day consecrated to prayer and holy thoughts, it has become a day of contamination and desecration, through slothfulness, luxury, and debauch. God, who gave us so liberal a measure of days, reserved one only for Himself, and of all the days in the week, the holiest is the worst kept. It is on this subject that I would speak to you to-day. I shall endeavour to touch your hearts, and to show you how Sunday is not only the Lord's day, but man's day, the day of the family and of society, and how a perseverance in the violation of this commandment not only renders us culpable toward God, but prepares the bitterest trials for ourselves, our families, and society.

What, my brethren, is Sunday? It is the day of the Lord.* All days are certainly God's; they are His because all made by Him. But in His goodness and mercy He has given us six to be employed for the advantage and use of our bodily necessities. One only He reserved for Himself, and of this, not the whole, but only certain hours, thus permitting us to employ the remainder of the day for salutary rest, and the restoration of our strength. In the scale of days, God has

* Italian version says: *Che cosa è la Domenica?* "*La parola lo dice,*" or, What is Sunday? The word itself teaches us, because *Domenica*, Italian term for Sunday, is derived from the Latin *Domine*, Lord.

fixed sacred intervals for rest and prayer. And this, from the beginning of the world, when He separated the earth from the water, when He stretched out the heavens as a pavilion, and sprinkled the firmament with stars and the valleys with flowers; and when He created man and had placed in his hands the sceptre of the world, God rested from His work, and, according to the sacred text, "He blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it." This, then, is the origin of the festival we call Sunday. From that moment the order of Time was established, and the days revolve in that mysterious circuit, which shall only cease with the consummation of all things. Therefore Moses said to the people: "Remember to keep holy the day of Rest"—"*Memento ut sanctifies diem Sabati.*" This injunction proves that he was not imposing a new law, but only sanctioning a traditionary and primordial law. Jesus, at His advent, confirmed this law, and, reforming it, authorized His Church to transfer the day of rest from the last to the first day of the week, to indicate the transition from the old to the new covenant, and this act, emanating from the God-man, only serves to render holier the day which is reserved for the glory of His Father. So that Sunday is really the day which God has made: "*Est dies quam fecit Dominus.*" So that in this

day are reassumed and consecrated all the great memories of nature and grace. It is the anniversary of the miracle whereby the world was created, as of that whereby the same world was saved. It was on Sunday that the Almighty Father, issuing from His eternal repose, said "*Fiat lux*"—Let there be light, and there was light. And it was on Sunday that the Son of Supernatural Light issued from the Sepulchre in all the splendour of His power and majesty. It was on a Sunday that the Holy Spirit descended upon the Apostles to inflame their zeal, inspire their tongues, and prepare them to convert and regenerate the world. "Glory be to Sunday!" exclaims S. John Chrysostom, "this is the day which saw the creature reconciled to the Creator," and adds, "Glory be to Sunday! for on this day God, who, after the fall, had seemed to have retired from the world, again appears to take possession of His heritage, and extend His Empire afresh over the minds and hearts of men." But O, my brethren, how is the day respected? Alas, the sound of the smith's hammer, the carpenter's axe, the sewing machines, and the shoemaker's tools is everywhere heard, like a cry of rebellion, and says, "We will not observe the day." And the same cry has been echoed alike for some time past, both in the country and in the city, in the old as in the

new world. The master repeats it to the servant, the rich man repeats it to the poor, and the wicked man, abusing his power, repeats it to his victim—the victim of want and necessity. But, brethren, where is our reason, where is our heart? Does not reason herself teach us that one of our first duties should be to consecrate to God a part of that time which we have received at His hands? Is it not justice that in the long chain of days of which God has formed the links, some should be set apart for actions of grace, and some consecrated to prayer? Even savage nations have acknowledged this, and what says our heart? God gives much, but asks little. He gives us six days for ourselves, during which He blesses our labours and renders them fruitful through His providence, and asks but one only for Himself. Could He ask less? And even had He not asked it, could our hearts dispense with it? If we owe gratitude to an earthly father or benefactor, what do we not owe to God, our universal Father and Supreme Benefactor! And is it not contrary to reason that God should have created us, and that we should refuse to acknowledge our dependence, or dedicate a day to Him for the payment of our tribute, or render Him our homage of praise, He Himself having established the day? What a sin it is, therefore, to profane it. If a man touch

your property, you call him a bad man and a thief. "The rights of property are sacred," you cry, and to destroy property would be to overturn society itself. And you are right. Respect, therefore, the property of man, but respect also the property of God. Is it too much to expect that God should be treated like any other proprietor? Sunday is the day God has made for Himself; it is, therefore, His property. And shall God's be less sacred than man's? A statue belongs of right to the artist who has fashioned it out of the marble, and shall not God have what He has made for Himself? Let us, then, respect God's property! Respect God's rights if you would have those of men respected! God is the trustee and guardian of all rights, and when His own are violated, laws, tribunals, and swords are helpless to insure them. Sunday is not only God's day, it is also man's day.

In creating man, God gave him a soul and a body, and made so intimate a tie between them that if the soul lack repose, the body undergoes a destructive influence, and if the body does not rest, the soul is agitated and disturbed. By establishing the Sunday rest, God provided for man's need, and measuring this rest according to the strength and organization of man, the Supreme Artist ordained it of the duration of one entire day, to return periodically every six

days. Thus as the rest of the night is given us to repair the fatigues of the day, so the rest of Sunday is given us to restore that strength which is consumed by labour, and man enters into God's idea when he calls this rest *Recreation*—that is to say, *a new creation*. The beneficence of this arrangement, my brethren, is less realized by those who are not compelled to gain their bread by the sweat of their brow. But let them ask the poor working man, who perhaps in all the week has no time to enjoy a meal with his family, ask the agricultural labourer who has had no rest during all the toil of the week, and they will tell you that Sunday is a providential institution. Ask the doctors, who will tell you that where the dominical precept is neglected, there is more sickness, precocious old age, and premature death. And what is man upon the earth? He is a king by reason of his soul. It is through his soul that he is made in the image of God, it is through his soul that he is placed only a little lower than the angels. Our soul, redeemed by His blood, is our title of nobility, without it we should be reduced to the condition of brutes. And shall our intelligent and privileged soul, made in the Divine image, that soul which is the breath of His lips, the emanation of His heart, our soul which is destined to the possession of God, have no day

dedicated to its interests and repose! Shall we have six days for the needs of the body, and none for the relief of the soul and for its recreation in God! Shall we remain six days with our heads bowed down to earth, and without one in which to raise them heavenwards?

What would become of us, under the weight of our passions, and our avarice, if the feast days did not come to deliver us from this mire, and to raise us from earth and propel us toward our Creator? Why, before long we might seek in vain to find men, in men! We should find instead beings of low and brutal appetites, degraded intellects and hearts incapable of experiencing generous sentiments, souls identified with matter! But God has willed it otherwise. He gave us first the precept *Memento dici Sabati*—"Remember to sanctify the Lord's Day;" and now He adds, *Miserere animæ tuæ*—"Have pity on thy soul"—which neglects its salutary repose. Holy things and truth are to the soul what bread is to the body. Dost thou not perceive, dost thou not feel how thy soul languishes, thirsting for peace, lacerated by sorrow and disappointment? "Man does not live by bread alone, but by all that cometh from the word of God." The soul needs calm, tranquillity, and love, and where shall she find it if not in the temple of God? Where

should the child rest, but in its father's house? And where should the soul rest, if not in the house of the Lord? Poor wanderer, who has forgotten the road that leads to Heaven, poor exile, who has lost the way that leads to her country! She needs someone to show it to her, and where shall she find this guide but in the temple of God, and on the day of the Lord! O, brethren, who does not feel the necessity of these days, on which, far from the world, in the solitude of our hearts, we may attend to those affairs which Jesus Christ calls not only important, but necessary to our salvation? And what days are these if not Festival Days? Tell me, my friends, when can the merchant and the tradesman think of God, when repeat to themselves that the riches of the earth are but mire? Can he reflect in the tumult and crush of business, in the shop, in the theatre, or on 'Change? And as to the poor, when can they reflect on God? Are they likely to think of their souls amid the turmoil of their daily work, while, weary and covered with dust and grime, they labour in the sweat of their brow? Tell me, poor people, if anyone spoke to you of God and eternity while so occupied, would you not answer as the Hebrews answered Moses, "Trouble us not, we have other things to think of than the promised land. Dost thou not see

our labours and our oppression?" Ah! none can deny the necessity of the Day set apart, in which man, resting from his labour, may remember that we have a God and a Master to serve, an immortal soul to save. The pilgrim who crosses the desert feels that he cannot accomplish his journey unless he find a palm tree under whose shadow he may rest, a spring in whose waters he may quench his thirst; and in the pilgrimage of life do we not feel that we need a day in which to rest under the shadow of the altar and the cross? In ascending a high mountain a man reposes for an instant, in order to consider the road which he has traversed, and that which it yet remains for him to climb, and if possible, to discover the surest way to reach the summit; and ought we not also to stop sometimes upon the road of life to review the past and study for the future the way that shall best lead us to Heaven? If we find it expedient to calculate at certain hours, and on certain days, our earthly gains and losses, should we not find it equally useful to make up our account with our Heavenly Father, and endeavour to repair the past? Even the young soldier, inured to the hardships and risks of war, finds it sometimes necessary to retire into his tent to dress his wounds, and do we never need to retire from the strife of the world

and throw ourselves into the Divine arms, to heal the wounds of our hearts? O, believe me, friends, believe me, the festival of Sunday is the resurrection day for Christians. It is on this day that a man's faith is confirmed and that he rises again to the beautiful light of truth through the holy mysteries of our belief. The solemnity of the day, its meditation, prayers, hymns, chaunted liturgies, the pomps of the altar, raise our senses from earth to our Father which is in Heaven, like the mysterious ladder seen by Jacob of which one end was upon earth and the other in Heaven. All these things reanimate the courage of the poor sons of Eve. The sole idea, brethren, the sole idea of God, filling the Temple with His invisible Majesty, its venerable walls, its paintings representing the victories of martyrs and of saints, the Holy Mother's ineffable smile, the sweet images of Jesus, so kind and good to all, terrible only to the hypocritical and proud, all this gives vigour to our spirit, and reminds us of the inheritance which awaits us in Heaven and the crown of glory which is preparing for us. And if, turning our attention from these sublime thoughts, we let it fall upon the remainder of our days, we may consider them as a respite given us by the Lord in which to merit that happiness which is not of this earth.

But Sunday is not only the day for mankind at large, it is essentially the day for the family. Family! How dear is the name to our lips and heart! Father, mother, sisters, brothers—all that is nearest and dearest to us in the world is embraced by it. Would you make your family a sanctuary of respect, obedience, and love? Would you give them the purest joys, the holiest emotions, the most expansive and large-minded sentiments? Then sanctify the Festival Day! To form a good family, the constant exercise of the duties which constitute family life and union among its members is necessary. Observe the festivals, and you will have both; forsake their observance and you will have neither, neither the instruction which reminds us of duty, nor motive sufficient to put it in practice. Fathers of families, you no longer come to mass on the festivals, and it is in the Church, in the presence of God and the people and your family, that paternal authority, that highest of all dignities, is confirmed to you. Here it is that the word of God becomes the sanction of your power, you, who would reign without God, but behold the consequences! Contempt and disobedience reign in your house, little revolutionists of fifteen or sixteen talk to you of paternal tyranny. You would reign without God, and the sceptre is

snatched from your hands, your family is ill-regulated, you are no longer the master in your own house, and, like degraded kings, you stand mute before your own hearths, if so be you are allowed to remain there, and not driven forth into the streets.

Fathers of families, who no longer bring your wives to church, but would fain stop them at the door, and compel them to renounce their habits of piety and their belief; who, out of the Church, will remind that woman that she ought to be an angel of submission, of modesty, of fidelity and sacrifice? These are things too easily forgotten, and the consequences of their neglect are terrible. Fathers of families, who no longer bring your children to the churches, you who no longer bring them to mass, and who say, "My children love me, and will obey me; if they do not, I shall be able to compel them to do so." Yes, they may love you, and they may obey you, till they come to the age of strong passions; but in that day will you be able to depend upon their submission? "But I will make them fear me," you say. These are foolish and unreasonable words. Fear lasts but for the moment, and the reaction is terrible. Alas! alas! for the father who would make a prison of the home which ought to be a sanctuary, and a sanctuary of peace! The doors of

the prison are soon opened, the bolts burst, the chains broken, old age supervenes, and what is the end of the domestic drama? The youth of sixteen, son of the profaner of the festival, makes his father tremble, evil passions boil within him, a voice from hell speaks through his lips, "Live, and treat your father as he has treated God, drive him out of the world, as he has driven God out of his house." O, fathers, O, mothers, who would be respected by your sons, give them an example yourselves by respecting God. Obey, if you would be obeyed. If you have not kept God's day holy, how can you expect your children to do so? Seeing you disobedient to God, how can you expect them to be obedient to you?

One day a child who had made his first communion was met by his father with a book in his hand. "Where are you going?" says the latter. "I am going to mass." "Mass, indeed! Mass is for your mother and for your sisters. You must come to work with me." The child hung his head, and in his eye there shone a tear. "But, father, is the commandment to keep holy the Sabbath Day only for my mother and sisters?" "Foolish observances, only fit for women and children," answered the father. "Then is the precept to honour our father and mother also foolishness?" said the child. The

father understood the lesson, and a few weeks later was seen with his son at mass. Fathers and mothers, go to mass and bring your children with you, that we, the priests of God, may remind them how much they owe to Him, and how much love and reverence they owe to you. And thus your paternal authority will be consolidated. We shall no longer see parents abandoned by their children, but loved with a love which shall last not only for life, and during the death-bed scene, but even after death. For beside strengthening paternal authority, the sanctification of the festival strengthens family ties. During the rest of the week the family is isolated and scattered. The father rises early and goes to work, the mother is occupied in household cares, the sons go to school or to their trade, the meal is eaten separately and hurriedly, the members of the family are only united in the evening, when mutual fatigue takes the place of every other sentiment. So that the home of the family who do not observe Sunday becomes a kind of inn where they eat, drink, and sleep, in which they know each other little, and love each other less. But on the contrary, where the Sunday is kept, what a different picture! On that blessed day joy is depicted on every face, on that day the father feels himself more a father, and by the

side of his aged parents and of his wife and children he feels the day to be not only the feast of God, but also the feast of his heart. The mother dresses her children in their Sunday garments, having carefully removed all traces of their week day toil, accompanies them to church, together with her husband, and enjoys everything doubly in the society of those beings whom she scarcely sees during the week, and in the expansion of maternal and filial love combined, she experiences much greater sweetness than in all the false pleasures of the world. And the children, what a day of delight it is for them—what joy in their little hearts. O, how sweet is the Christian's festival! There is something in Sunday which makes one look forward with joy to the end of the week; all nature seems, so to speak, in holiday garments. Do you recollect the effect it made upon you in your childhood? I remember it well, and believe that what I felt you also felt. In our childhood, on our awakening, the morning of the festival, we realized that it was Sunday. The very birds seemed to sing more sweetly, the church bells rang more cheerily, the air was fuller of harmonious sounds and richer in sweet odours, the sky was brighter, the sun so brilliant that we could scarcely understand the mystery, and asked in our secret heart how

Creation could so change in one day? Ah, we learnt the reason later on in life! O, babe, still wet with the waters of baptism, warm from the maternal embrace, it is the reflection of thy own innocent soul which irradiates creation and makes it like unto thee. The child on a feast-day rises and runs to church, to church which is the House of God, and also the house of the people. The rich man has his palace, and is satisfied with a small chapel, but the poor man loves great churches, as he loves great festivals, which our religion alone provides. In these, before the altars where art has woven all its enchantments in one sublime achievement, the man of the people enters and realizes the greatness of God; the child enters, and hears the solemn harmony, scents the perfume of the incense and the flowers, hears the Latin words that as yet he understands not, but which speaks to his heart and tells him of the heavenly country far away, and on the wings of Hope and Love he runs from the house to the temple, from the temple to the house, bringing home to his mother the blessing of God in exchange for her caresses. O, sweet festivals of our religion, how I love you! Ye have never cost a mortification to anyone, nor a tear to innocence; ye have never cost a piece of bread to the father of a family, and your morrows

are ever free from remorse. But Sunday is not only the day of God and man and of the family, but it is also a day for the sanctification of society. Society needs three things, without which it cannot exist: *respect*, *obedience*, and *love*; and these three things it gains from Sunday observance. First, it is the true school for respect, and without respect there can be no such thing as society. He who sincerely respects God respects God's creatures, and when men forsake the churches, when they no longer respect the sanctification of the festivals, by despising God, they despise also all that they have loved, believed, and honoured, and consequently all that their neighbour loves, believes, and honours. And, mark well, that contempt in society is like jealousy in men: it aims always at those things which are highest and most sacred; hence derives the impulse to ruin and overturn everything, which is one of the greatest of social dangers, and against which armed force is useless, for contempt is stronger than soldiery, since it arms the mind as well as the body.

In the second place, *obedience* is necessary to society, and the observance of Sunday teaches us obedience. Social life subsists by obedience to legitimate authority, and when obedience fails, what becomes of society? It becomes turbulent

and anarchical. But in the Sunday observance we find the best school for obedience. On Sunday the people kneel in the churches in homage to the King of Kings and Lord of all. But when the people are drawn away from these observances, when they are led to profane the day of the Lord, it will not be long before this people, who are always logical, will say in accents of rebellion, "Why should we continue to obey men, when we are no longer bound to obey God?" Let us never forget that we trample on man's authority whenever we condemn that of God.

Finally, what society most needs, is *love*. For society means harmony, order, and union, and this harmony, order, and union can only be maintained by love. And the observance of the Sunday is a great school for love. For it summons and collects together all classes of men in the temple, and there all is unison; divisions are unknown. Everything induces us to love, because everything unites us—the same prayer, the same communion, the same sacraments, which are as the symbol of our universal reception in the arms of our Heavenly Father. Take away these festivals, and you will see how hearts will be eaten up with egotism. Outside the Church men have nothing to unite them, everything to divide them; riches and poverty, success and misfortune, everything

tends to separate them—everywhere we find division, nowhere union. And again, outside the Church, what do we see? On the one side, egotists, who would leave whole nations to perish for the sake of their personal interests or to increase their patrimony; on the other, jealousies and hatred, which would not stop short at murder or fratricide in order to procure and enjoy their selfish pleasures. Egotism everywhere and always—the cold selfishness which engenders fierce and ill-concealed hatred, ready to burst forth with a terrible explosion to the ruin and destruction of society. And then, O, friends, the cry of rebellion arises, society is convulsed, and as by the shock of an electric current the people rise in masses; a people without God, without prayers, without altars, and without churches, they leave their workshops, and rushing out of their offices and factories, guided by agitators who seek to brutify them in order to dominate them for their own ends, they run madly they know not whither, crying, Down with this, and down with that, down with religion and down with institutions! Thus human nature in contempt for God's day unites contempt for authority and greatness, and with hatred to man develops into social anarchy.

Peroration.—Friends, there are men who

would deprive the people of their festivals, their religious festivals, of which Sunday is the chief. But what will they give them instead? Ask the people, and they reply: "They promise us material prosperity." But have they maintained, and can they maintain, their promises? Material prosperity is, we know, the last element of human happiness, but since it is this which our age and civilization demands, would you know the best means of obtaining it? I answer, the faithful observance of the Sunday law. Neither is this impossible or contradictory. Let us understand what you mean by material prosperity? Do you mean the diminution of work, and the cultivation of the intelligence? If so, the Sunday festival, by taking one day from work, strengthens the body and restores the mind. Do you hold that prosperity consists in an augmentation of salary, and an increase of produce? Then mark me well. Work is a rateable value, and as its value decreases in proportion as the supply is greater than the demand, religion and the Sunday law, by diminishing work, augments its value, and enables the workman to earn in six days enough to maintain him for seven. And it also augments the products, for a workman extenuated by fatigue produces less than a man invigorated by the Sunday rest. Do you desire the increase

of capital? But what produces capital is not merely mechanical labour, it is intellectual development. And the Sunday rest gives an entire day to the workman in which to cultivate his mind. What more would you have for the prosperity of the poor working man? Would you give him increased liberty and diminish his servitude? Well, our religion and its Sunday laws give a day of reprieve to the people from servitude and free them from the yoke of man, only leaving them the easier yoke of God. On the other days of the week the working-man serves; on the Sunday he rises to a sublime equality with his employer, while worshipping in the same temple, in the presence of their mutual Lord and Master. What more would you have for the material good of the working-man? "We would rescue him from the egotism of the rich," is your cry, and you cry it loudly, but the Sunday law says it better than you. The Sunday law draws near the poor workman, and laying her hand on his toil-stained forehead, says to the rich man, his employer, "Consider this man, he is not a machine, made to enrich you, nor is he an instrument of production, but a creature made like you, in the likeness and image of God; if you impose upon him degrading work or the transgression of the Divine law by compelling

him to work on the Sunday festival, remember that God holds in His hand thunderbolts of justice to punish him who offends against His law of mercy in the persons of His children!" Thus the Sunday law does its behest, whilst they who go about proclaiming themselves the friends of the working-man, lead him to transgress the holy law of God and the law of rest, and after having robbed him of his virtue and even of his health, they rob him of the very material prosperity which they are always promising him, but which they never give him. The enemies of God are the enemies of the people, and the friends of God are a thousand times the best friends of the people. "But this is false," I hear someone say; "we wish for the freedom of the working-man." Freedom, what irony! Yes, you would have him free, to die of hunger; this is the liberty of the working-man. Liberty to ruin himself, body and soul, liberty never to rest, liberty to struggle with misery and slavery, divided between the impossibility of living and the apostasy of duty. Such is the liberty you offer him! You say, "But we do not compel him; he is free to refuse to work." Yes, I repeat, he is free to die of hunger! You do not compel him, but you say to him, "Work on Sunday, or leave your place to another who will!" "Work

on Sunday, or you will die of hunger, you and your children and your aged parents." And the poor man bows his head before this iron despotism, and you call him free!

"But we pay him, and we want him to work." And what is this but tyranny? You pay them, but are they lives to be bought? Can you buy their souls? It is time to make an end of this pretended omnipotence of gold; all the treasures of the world would not suffice to buy a single soul! Human greatness and dignity consist in honour and conscience; without honour and without conscience man is reduced to the state of a machine. And of what value are such men? To-day you buy his conscience to serve your ends; to-morrow he will buy yours to serve his ends. And what would be the consequence? A mercenary people, who are only waiting for a buyer, the worst of all servilities. And the greater fault will not lie with the masses, for he who buys a soul is worse than he who sells it. But you answer still, "The first necessity of a democratic society is labour, and the need of labour." This is an old excuse. Necessity for labour is exceptional. Labour is a noble and powerful aid to society; but can we talk of labour when we are treating of *humanity*? Man is not made for labour, but labour for man. Labour is

a beautiful and sacred thing, which provides the poor with bread, but it is not labour which tyrannizes the worker; it is man, who by abusing labour, compels the poor labourer to work on the festival. O, if you knew how much it costs the poor to work on feast days! On these occasions they are sad and sullen, they feel like exiles amid the multitudes who are resting or amusing themselves, and hatred enters into their hearts and ripens them for rebellion!

And here I would conclude; but permit me to address a word to the working-man who works without being obliged. Poor man, why do you not rest on Sunday? "Father, my trade obliges me to it." O, tell me, is your trade superior to the law of God? "But if I did not work, I should lose custom." Then you value your custom more than God. I, for one, assure you that you would not lose it, because the conscientious man always finds customers; your religion is security for your probity, and he who understands business knows that men who fear God do not cheat others. The workman who adheres to the law of God will be always preferred to him whose only God is money. Many are the families ruined by vicious and irregular living, but you have never known a single one ruined by keeping the Sunday holy! "But, father, we

must live, even on feast days!" And for this reason you ought not to work, you ought not to wear out your bodies prematurely; uninterrupted and constant labour produces sickness, debility, and precocious death. "But, father, we must eat even on Sunday." Yes, but that is not all, you must *drink* too, which is more costly! "Father, you talk finely, but if I do not work, religion will not come to bring me bread for my family." My son, it is not religion which causes scarcity of bread in a house, but bad houses and public-houses, and very different causes. Has the family of the God-fearing workman ever been known to die of hunger? "But, father, by working on festivals I gain something extra to put by for future needs." My son, you are playing a dangerous game. You are in the hands of God. A bad sickness, a bad son, a scarcity of work, all these things may occur, and then what will become of the money which you have put together at the expense of your health and your conscience? But even supposing that all should go well, one day will see you stretched on your death-bed, and then what good will that money do you which you have acquired at the expense of your health and your conscience? It will only serve to increase the agonies of your death-bed. Alas, poor working man, if you have left your God,

return to Him; yes, return to your Jesus. He knoweth your needs, for He was poor as you are! Poor workman, do what a workman did at the time of the revolution in Paris. While employed in excavating among the ruins of a church he perceived the arms of a crucifix protruding from a heap of rubbish, and, extricating it, he first embraced Jesus with enthusiasm, and then, planting the cross on the top of the ruins, he cried to his companions, "Kneel, comrades, kneel before your King. Behold Him who loves us, behold Him who will never deceive us!" Yes, brethren, he said the truth; Jesus only has never deceived poor working men, and after having consoled and helped them in this world, He will give them their reward in another!

XXVI.

FAITH AND SCIENCE.

Exordium.—The youth of our age, led astray by those whose duty it is to teach them the truth, too generally believe that Faith is incompatible with, and even contrary to, the development of Science and the progress of ideas, as unfolded through successive centuries and culminating in civilization. On every hand, through ignorance or malice, our enemies raise these accusations against us. They compare us to Egyptian mummies, wrapped in swathing bands, shut up in absolute immobility, without one ray of light to penetrate our tomb. Our Faith is for them an old tale, only fit for men immersed in the darkness of superstition, but useless and hurtful to the postulates of Science and to the life of man. “The reign of Faith,” they say, “is ended, the superstitions of the past have made way for Science; we have entered into a more positive age, we ought no longer to encumber the broad way of life with the memories of dead times.” My friends, these “savants” do not understand

the immortal youth of our Faith! The great minds of the middle ages, while preparing the vast synthesis of the Sciences and the sum total of the laws of human knowledge, exerted themselves to apply and bring to bear the light of the *word* on all the paths followed and explored by the human mind. The learned believer is not a thinker shut up in a solitude inaccessible to the voice of Science; the learned believer is not a man satisfied by repeating pious monologues with the docility of fanaticism, or an antiquated formula with the ignorance of superstition, like the Jews reciting verses of the Bible, or the Mahometan muttering the sacramental phrases of the Koran. The learned believer is a man of his time, a man of his country; he is continually in contact with the current ideas evolved among men, which progress with the progress of civilization, and follow in its footsteps. He recognizes the certain results of Science, nor objects to study even rash hypotheses; he is not adverse to any kind of progress or discovery, being often himself an inventor or discoverer.

Let us then inquire into this, because of all the weapons used by the enemy to combat religion, this is the most dangerous. According to our enemies it would seem that there is absolute incompatibility between Science and Faith, and

that Faith has a horror of Science, and Science a horror of Faith.

When we ask why Faith is contrary to Science, contrary to its development and progress, the first reply we receive is this: "Because your belief forbids you to love Science." Great God, our belief forbid us to love Science! But it is for our Faith that we love Science, and we love it more than the same free-thinkers themselves! It is for our Faith that we love it with a passionate and jealous love; we love Science by reason of our Faith; we love it for itself, for God, and for the good it brings the world.

In the first place, we love Science for itself. For us it is not only the simple observation of facts. For us it is not the power of freeing ourselves from the fatality by which our reason is surrounded. Science for us has a power and an immortal beauty, it is the teaching of God, the explanation of the work of God. It is like a divine light shining athwart the clouds, and preserving even in its most distant reflections something of the brightness and the beauty of God.

Yes, Science reveals to us under all its aspects the power and the wisdom of God; and how should we not love it? We admire the dream of an artist when it glows on a canvas, breathes in

marble, till the vision moves and stirs us to sublime ecstasy. It is thus that we love Science, when in its harmonies it reveals to us the thoughts, designs, and works of God, the works of the Creator ! But we not only love Science for itself, we love it also for God, we love it because it reveals to us the beauty of God Himself, because it is a step which brings us nearer to God, because it is an instrument which helps us to glorify Him. Yes, Science raises us to God, shows us His power, His greatness, His beauty, and sings to us of His glory.

The great Leibnitz expressed this idea in admirable words: "The first end of Science is to make us love God." He also says, "I love Science because it gives me the right to be listened to when I speak of God and religion." Lastly, we love Science for the good which it brings the world. The love with which Faith and charity inspires us for the well-being of mankind, for the progress of civilization, makes us love science in all its extension, in all its applications. We do not certainly consider it as the universal panacea, the remedy for every ill, the resource for every need, or as the climax of human aspirations. We recognize it as a powerful instrument, good or bad, according to the intention of him who employs it, and which apart from

religion leads only to the greater ruin and perversion of the mind. And it is for this reason that we demand Christian belief and Christian truth, a just and by no means offensive requirement. Indeed, it is an indispensable condition of Science to be well directed and not opposed to the mission of its benefactress, and this direction is supplied by religion, that divine aroma, as Bacon calls it, which hinders its corruption. For in every age, in that of Renaissance, as in that of Decadence, in barbarous as well as civilized times, we find the Church the depository of Science as well as of Faith. For many centuries her followers were the only Apostles of Science, the only promoters of scientific progress. And the Church created, developed, and organized public teaching. Public teaching was not known in ancient times, and while its philosophers reserved their lessons for privileged disciples, the Church, on the contrary, collected round its cathedra men of all ages and all conditions. Her lessons were by no means private. She teaches all without distinction, great and little, learned and ignorant, people and kings. Progress is unlimited; S. Paul says that all truth, all virtue, all the laws of justice, all which aids holiness and is of good report, is worthy of our consideration. "*Si qua est virtus, si qua est disciplina, hæc*

cogitate.” The teaching of our Faith is popular; it is suited to all classes. While it introduces elect souls into the sanctuary of Science, it stoops to simple souls, and calls all, without distinction, to its schools, as to the gospel banquet of which we read. To the poor, the lame, the weak, and the abandoned, it distributes instruction equally, to give to all the bread of the word. The Church admits of no distinction between the social classes; all are called to the banquet of life, to the banquet of instruction; she not only desires it, she proclaims and wills it. The Church in her mission of evangelization cannot permit that religious education should be the privilege of a favoured class. Instruction for all is not a novelty; the Church has ever made the greatest efforts and sacrifices toward establishing it, and the zeal for public instruction which is now so loudly proclaimed is not of recent, but of ancient origin. If we open the pages of history we find everywhere the luminous traces of the work of the Church. As soon as formed, she says to her ministers, “*Docete Omnes.*” She penetrates synagogues and academies, enters cities, descends from the house-top to the piazza, is heard in temples as in catacombs, and neither the wisdom of Greece nor the pride of the Romans dare oppose her. She teaches in season

and out of season. "*Opportune ed importune.*" The apostles appear in the world, and the famous schools of Jerusalem, Antioch and Alexandria place themselves at the head of Christian instruction. Issuing from these, we meet with philosophers like Justinian, critics like Origen, savants like Clement of Alexandria, apologists like Tertullian, and doctors like Irenæus. Among the Athenians, the two Gregories, the Chrysostoms, the Ambroses, the Jeromes, and the Augustines. And when the barbarians invade the Roman empire, when the great schools of Rome, Athens, Antioch, and Cesarea are carried away by time and the human hurricane, when the nations are about to lose their traditions, then in Italy, in Spain, in Gaul, in Great Britain the poor monks collect and preserve in their convents and monasteries the remains of history, philosophy, literature, and science, both sacred and profane. There, in the silence of their retreats, they copy with indefatigable patience what they understand as well as what they do not understand, and thus preserve from the barbarians a considerable part of their scientific treasure, in order that it may serve as basis to future generations. And when the Renaissance period arrives, S. Anselm carries philosophy to such a height as only Descartes has

since attained. And what shall we say of St. Bernard, that great student of nature? It is true that he was not then generally followed, but his influence, which still remains, proves the power of his genius. Shall we speak of S. Thomas Aquinas who made Science advance two full centuries! We owe our universities to our Faith. Those of Bologna and Ferrara in Italy, those of Oxford and Cambridge in England, in other nations those of Salamanca, of the Sorbonne, of Lavagno, of Prague, Copenhagen, and others. The Popes founded them themselves or by their influence. Who was it who would have schools for Greek, Hebrew, and Chaldee in the University of Bologna? It was Clement the Fifth. And Pico di Mirandola and Weissel and all the other restorers of Oriental language, were they not Catholic? And yet they say that Faith is contrary to Science. Cast a glance on the scientific discoveries; what has antiquity discovered in the course of 4,000 years in astronomy, arithmetic, and geology? Before Archimedes, Pythagoras, Hippocrates, and Galen, before these great men the form of our world was unknown, the plan of the heavens unimagined, the marvels of the human body, now known even to their inmost fibres, were veiled in mystery. Who had imagined the wonders of electricity and light? The power-

ful genius of Christians and Catholics, by searching the wonders of creation. Copernicus, Kepler, Newton, who were Christians, penetrated the mysteries of astronomy. Descartes and Leibnitz, who assisted, by the infinitesimal calculus, the discoveries of these great men; Spallanzoni, the precursor of modern physiologists; Cuvier, who introduced geology as a science, the great ecclesiastic who discovered the laws of crystallization—all these were Christians, and you know that one might follow out the list, and at greater length. But it seems to me that these suffice to prove that our credence is not contrary to the development of Science. Would you know, friends, *what is* contrary to its development? Other religions which cannot stand before it. The poor Mahometan, the poor pagan cannot embrace Science without denying his belief. But it is not so with ours. No! from Justinian to Leibnitz and Kepler, not to speak of the moderns, Faith has existed together with Science in the greatest geniuses, and when, later on, impartial history shall have tested the philosophical scientific balance of our nineteenth century, it will be found that the great men who have shed a little light on the vast fields of Philosophy and Science belonged to Christianity. Spiritual philosophers, historians, poets, and learned men of every kind have counted

among them men eminently religious. It is true that some much-to-be-pitied savants have hoped for the incompatibility between Faith and Science and founded their hopes upon inventions and discoveries that they believed certain, but whenever they have exceeded the limits of their hypotheses, whenever a profound examination of facts has reduced them to their real and true measure, what has been found? It has been found that those facts proved exactly that which they wished to destroy. In the present day there are other learned men who place new hopes in new discoveries, but what is true with regard to one branch of knowledge is true with regard to all, what is proved for one Science is proved for others, and it is clear to all that God alone could begin and carry out the grand design through all ages. His truth continues its glorious march of triumph. The second accusation brought against our Faith is that it "hinders the light." Good God! is it not just the contrary? Does not Faith throw a splendid light on the first principles of Science and its application? Good God! is it not Faith which throws so bright a halo round those ranges of knowledge which are as the keystones of the edifice of Science? Does not Faith complete and crown Science? When the wise man has arrived at the world's confines, after having

explored it in every sense, Faith presents herself, as Beatrice presented herself to Dante, to lead him further on. Depositrix of another order of truth, she would extend his knowledge beyond the visible world, and there beyond, where the savant sees only enigmas, religion offers him their solution and explanation and does for his reason what Beatrice did for Dante. Beatrice takes up Dante where Virgil left him and conducts him to the regions of Paradise. Faith takes hold of reason where the savant left it, illuminates and penetrates its shadows and its chiaroscuros by rays of celestial light, discovering many objects which lay hidden in darkness, adding to the prospect which the learned man discerns with the eyes of reason, another, and more marvellous, which ravishes him, filling his soul with its infinite grandeur. The philosopher, who gains his knowledge from God, and from the soul, and seeks to reveal the secrets of the divine life, opens to us new and vast horizons, attracts Science to himself—attaching it to God as by a chain which links it to the Infinite. So that Faith is to Science what the cupola is to the temple. Through it descend floods of light, it cannot be separated from its base, we cannot separate what God has united. If you separate religion from Science, what follows? Religion.

without Science, Science without Faith, are like a dome suspended in the air, deprived of its foundations, and Science without connection with God is like a ruined or incomplete structure.

The third accusation brought against the Faith by those who say it is contrary to Science, and more especially to scientific progress, is this—that *Faith controls Science*. It is true, brethren, that Faith presents certain limits to the savant, and these limits or barriers proceed from *living traditions*, and from *doctrinal authority*. But they have only one object, that of preserving him from ruin and from false steps. We know that there are some necessary kinds of dependence, and also some kinds of dangerous independence; the blind man who wanders rashly at his own will, or guided by another as blind as himself, is in danger, saith the Scripture, of falling into the ditch. So the man who follows his own impulses without a guide and without control may fall into an abyss or obtain a negative result. As in material life a guide is often needed, so in the world of Science guides and tracks are necessary. These guides, these tracks the wise man finds in *living tradition* and *doctrinal authority*. Yes, my brethren, among learned Christians there are traditions which must be observed in the interest of scientific progress, and these traditions are

not barriers thrown across the life of progress to oppose their passage; they are rather, mark me well, like boundary lines which indicate where the safe ground ends and the dangerous incline commences which leads to the abyss. They are free to pass the bounds; but is it not well to warn them?

Doctrinal authority, which interprets these traditions where they contain uncertainties or dangers, does no more than fix these boundaries and complete them; if it forbid men to pass them it is because it knows that beyond lies an abyss and ruin, and that the cause of Science cannot be served by contradicting the Faith. False Science has cried out at this tyranny, has chosen to pass the line, and has passed. And with what results? Judge for yourselves. She turns to man and says to him, "Your genealogy is not of *divine*, but rather of *bestial* origin." To the soul she says, "Your thoughts, your sentiments, your holy and pure affections are only the fate-impelled movements of material globules." He says to virtue: "Thou art a vain word," and to vice, "Thou art a law, for thou art at least enjoyment." Poor humanity sinks oppressed under the weight of such a tyranny. Friends, let us be convinced; moral activity needs regulation, just as a machine, invented by human genius, needs a guard like

those provided in manufactories, and without such precautions we run the risk of being caught up and devoured by the wheels of error. But the scientific spirit, healthily understood, how can we misunderstand the rules and prohibitions imposed by the doctrinal authority of the Church? "But, father," you say, "have you forgotten what we all remember—the fact of Galileo? Have you forgotten how that proves the opposition of your Faith to the spirit of Science?" Yes, Galileo, sad and solitary fact, brought forward in all the objections made with regard to the agreement of Faith and Science! Well, my hearers, I will pause awhile and freely and loyally discuss the fact. Let us begin by confessing that Galileo *was* condemned because his system was considered contrary to Scripture, was condemned because he was believed to teach things contrary to those taught in the Holy Scriptures, and that the tribunal which so condemned him was mistaken. Having openly acknowledged this, because all subterfuge is unworthy of truth, and especially of Faith, let us make some observations by which we may better understand the import of this condemnation. In the first place, our Faith is nowise impugned by it, the infallibility of the Church is noways engaged in it, because Galileo was not condemned by the Faith, nor by the

Church, but only by a tribunal of theologians, whose sentences, though of high authority, do not pass, in themselves, for things infallibly judged.

In the second place, the tribunal was mistaken as to the scientific interpretation of Scripture. It believed that the language of the writer was doctrinal and absolute, while it was only a traditional form of language, significant of the current opinions, in the same way as when we say: "The sun rises," "The sun sets," although in Science such language is false. In the third place, the error into which the tribunal fell was supported, favoured, and we may even say occasioned, by the fault of the learned men of that day, who were nearly all opposed to Galileo. So that theologians and physiologists concurred in encouraging the error. Therefore the "savants" have no reason for reproving the theologians. Finally, my brethren, Galileo guessed rightly, it is true, but supported his discoveries by bad proofs. When one reads his most important work, the *Saggiatore*, we do not find in it the scientific proofs of his discoveries. These came afterwards through Foucault, so that we may say that Galileo understood his subject well, but demonstrated it ill.

Therefore our adversaries are wrong in presenting this accusation as a scientific proof of the

error made by the Church, and are more than ever wrong in producing it as a proof that Faith is contrary to scientific progress, for Faith, you perceive, has nothing to do with it, nor the infallibility of the Church. But they who persist in declaring that Faith is contrary to scientific progress, what of them? Benjamin Constant says they only give a clear proof of their ignorance and insanity. Let us pray that these perverted minds may recognize their errors; let us pray that the beautiful synthesis of Science crowned by Faith may be established on a yet wider basis; let us pray that it may be given to us to contemplate that sublime spectacle which Plato in his great mind had foreseen, the divine spectacle which humanity has thrice been called upon to admire during the course of three centuries. The first time, when after the struggle with Paganism, learning clasped hands with religion, a union which gave birth to the glorious fourth century. The second time, when after the laborious birth of our religion, Christian nations arose like cathedrals upon the earth, to the greater glory of God, and the sciences formed around them one harmonious circle. And finally, when in the seventeenth century, the sciences and fine arts drew near to the altar and to religion, to render it those splendours of which they had robbed it.

O, brethren, I invoke with all the strength of my soul a return of this peaceful era; I invoke with all my heart peace between two powers so well suited to understand each other, whose union has produced the finest of all works, the work of Christian civilization. O, may they one day unite, never to separate!

And the present moment seems propitious! Providence has placed on the chair of St. Peter's a great Doctor of Divinity, whose words, deep and sublime both as a Christian and a Philosopher, have drawn the attention of serious minds and generally interested the world of savants, and whose tiara shines with a double lustre, the halo of a splendid intellect! The angel of the schools, Saint Thomas Aquinas, inspires his master. Leo XIII., with wonderful zeal, labours to divulge the doctrines of that incomparable genius, and to unite rational truth with the teachings of Faith in one admirable synthesis. Leo XIII. labours for the union of philosophy with religion for the health of the world at large. O, what a beautiful day will that be in which our country and its religion will clasp hands in a sweet embrace! O, what a day will that be in which modern Science shall be united with Faith! A day of happiness and joy for all!

XXVII.

THE EUCHARIST.

Exordium.— In considering the history of Catholicism, we understand how God designed that it should develop itself little by little, following the development of the human race. At its commencement we find only types and shadows, prefiguring with precision the mysteries to be fulfilled in the course of time. As time progresses, these images are drawn with greater precision, the shadows are illuminated, and we feel the approach of the Sun of Justice, of whom they are the heralds, and without whom they would not exist. The religion of Eden announces these mysteries more vaguely than the religion of the patriarchs, and patriarchal religion announces them with less precision than does the religion of the law. But when Jesus Christ appears, religion receives a newer development. Types and shadows disappear, with Jesus comes the truth and the light. Jesus says, "I am come to perfect the law," and He speaks truly. The highest manifestation of the Divinity is the

personal manifestation. By rendering Himself present here below in the very heart of religion, Jesus gave to it all the perfection of which it is capable here below. But here below, even after the personal manifestation of God, religion cannot obtain its complete development. As the ancient order of things, consisting of simple shadows, has given place to the present, so will a new order succeed to this, in which we shall see face to face Him who we now behold as "through a glass." As the Church has succeeded to the synagogue, Heaven, or Supreme perfection, will succeed to the Church. Thus we perceive how the Church, after Jesus, should be regarded as the intermediate term between the synagogue and Heaven, between the ancient and the heavenly Jerusalem. What do we find in ancient Jerusalem? The prefiguring and foreshadowing of Christ. What shall we find in the Heavenly Jerusalem? The possession of Christ without types or shadows. What ought we then to find in the Church? Both foreshadowing and possession. Foreshadowing, because we are not yet capable of, or prepared for, the vision of Christ, possession because Christ has already come to satisfy the desire of mankind. Therefore we need the Eucharist; that is, something which does not give us the shadow without possession, nor possession without the

shadow. See, brethren, how naturally and aptly the Eucharist places itself in the history of humanity, for the development of the designs of Providence with regard to religion, and such is the sweet argument of which it is my privilege to-day to treat.

Brethren, when we speak of the Eucharist we often hear it said, "But, father, how can we believe in this mystery?" How believe in it?—as all Christian generations for nineteen centuries have believed in it, with humility and goodwill. The Pagan philosophers, in the days of Augustus, Tiberius, and Nero, did not believe our mysteries, before having heard the apostles, but when the Faith was taught them, they believed. And why cannot we do what they did? Have we not sufficient faith and heart to embrace the Truth? Had they not greater difficulties and more deeply-rooted prejudices to overcome than we have? If humanity has believed in the Eucharist, it is a proof that faith in the Eucharist is possible. We may seek far for an excuse for our incredulity, for the world converted to Christ is evident proof that the Christian mysteries are credible. You ask, How are we to believe? And I ask, How are we not to believe? We certainly ought to have no difficulty in believing in God, substantial

truth; in Jesus Christ, the Infallible organ of the Father; in the Church, Infallible organ of the Son; God, Jesus Christ, and the Church all affirm that Jesus Christ is present in the Eucharist; what then remains to us but to prostrate ourselves, to believe and adore? In the first place God has said it. He has said it by His symbols, for from the beginning of time He willed the manifestation of His mysteries to prepare us for His truth and cause us to partake of it by anticipation. He has also declared it to us by prophecy in a multitude of figures. He is first the Tree of Life, the Paschal Lamb, the Melchisedec, who offers up bread and wine, the David who sings, the Prophet Hosea who announces the Host which is to be offered from the East to the far West, and Solomon who describes the seven columns of the temple, amid which arise mysterious tables. We find everywhere a prophecy announcing a reality or a truth, and a figure prefiguring another figure. When at length the time arrives for the revelation of these figures, and the fulfilment of these prophecies, that is to say, the Advent of Jesus, hear what He says. He speaks to the Samaritan at the well of Jacob; He preaches from the hills of Galilee and in the plains, followed by a numerous multitude, which multitude, though

nourished by His hand, and fed by His prodigies, says to Him one day, "Thou are not greater than Moses; Moses maintained a multitude in the wilderness for forty years, but thou hast only given us once a little bread." He answers, "Yesay that I am no greater than Moses, but I (O, wonderful words) am the *living bread* descended from Heaven," and adds, "If you eat not the flesh of the Son of Man, if you drink not His blood, you shall have no life in you." And they, wondering, say, "His flesh! His blood! But how can He give us His flesh to eat; how can He give us His blood to drink?" How? Human nature is always saying to God, "How?" and "Why?" Just as though He smile not at the doubts and weaknesses whereby His creatures challenge Him. But Jesus, without anger, replies, "Verily, verily, I say unto you (twice using the form of an oath), I say unto you, that my body is really meat, and my blood is really drink." His body, His blood; how can He give us these to eat and to drink? and they leave Him. And Jesus lets them go, but turns to His apostles, and says to them, "Will ye also abandon me?" But Peter, with a voice full of affectionate accents, answers, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the word of eternallife." And yet, after nineteen centuries, pride says to us again, "And how can He give us His

flesh to eat; how can He give us His blood to drink?" But we will kneel before His tabernacle, we will cry with all the strength of our soul, "O, Jesus, we will not abandon Thee, Thou alone hast the words of eternal life; we believe in Thy word, and we accept it because it is the word of the Gospel." But Jesus goes even further, in that solemn night, the last before He died, while supping with His disciples. He remembers both them and us, by means of the sweetest testament which the heart of a father could conceive, or a dying mother, anxious for her children. "I go," says Jesus, and as He speaks the warm love which He has in His heart shines forth from His brow, "I go to die a victim for you, but I do not leave you orphans"—*non relinquam vos orphanos*. And He adds: The love which makes Me die for you will not permit of a separation; "take this" which I present to you under the species of bread: it is My body; and this, which I present to you under the species of wine: this is My blood. Under these species I remain to console you even to the end of the world; it is the same body which will soon be given up for you to scourges, the same blood which will soon be shed for you even to its last drop. The sacrifice which I am about to make upon the Cross for you, you will thus continue to the end of ages, do it in

memory of Me, of all I have suffered for you. "*Hoc facite in meam commemorationem.*" Such was the last testament of Christ on the vigil of His crucifixion, on the eve of His death—He offered us this record of His love. How doubt such words? It is impossible that an upright and sincere mind should not grasp the natural sense of the text. Luther says, "I have laboured much to prove that in the Eucharist there is nought but bread, for it would cause much damage to the Papacy, but I cannot do it; the text is too clear." Our separated brethren have withdrawn from this natural sense, they have done violence to the language and to the vocabulary; they have tortured the words of the Divine Master, and have ended by finding them void of sense. And what have they gained by it? The apostles, on the contrary, interpreted them in their literal and real sense; on the morrow of the Pentecost they offered up the Holy Sacrifice, and the altar is still shown on which S. Peter celebrated the mysteries of the Eucharist. S. Paul says, "He who eats or drinks unworthily," the body and blood of Jesus, "eats and drinks his own condemnation." My brethren, these words are clear, and after this, who will have the courage to say, "How can we believe in the Holy Eucharist?" If the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist were not

established, we should have the right to rise up at the day of judgment and say to Him, "On your word, and on that of your apostles, we believed, adored, and received the Holy Particle because we believed to receive Thee, but Thou has deceived us, for it was an illusion." Yes, we should have the right, but this is supposing an impossibility. Heaven and earth both prove to us that the Word of Christ is truth. But beside the Gospel we have the testimony of the Church, whose history from age to age has never ceased to repeat the same solemn affirmation. In its earliest ages it descends into the catacombs. Ask of these primitive monuments of our faith whose walls are stained by the blood of martyrs, and the dark galleries will show you the symbols of the Eucharist. There, on the tombs of the martyrs, the sacrifice of the blood of Jesus was offered for the strengthening and encouraging of the souls of future martyrs. When later the Church acquired her liberty, basilicas and cathedrals rose majestically over the tabernacles, the tabernacles which contained Jesus. For nineteen centuries man has found strength and consolation in the Eucharist. And if we consult the Fathers of the Church, from S. Ignatius of Antioch to S. Augustine, from S. Bernard to S. Francois de Sales, we find a chain of testimony from which no link is

missing, and a chorus of voices repeating, "Yes, Jesus is present, Jesus Christ is present in the Holy Eucharist." Brethren, what more do we want? If these authorities do not suffice, what others can? Do we believe the teaching of the Church with regard to the Eucharist to be true or false? If true, we must kneel and worship. If false, we must deny the Divinity of Jesus, because Jesus Christ having established the Church as the depository of light and the teacher of the people, would He have allowed it to fall into error? If so, what sort of Divinity would Jesus be? A God without wisdom, because He would not have known how to guard His own work and conduct it to its end; a God without goodness, for He would have permitted souls to perish for centuries; and a God without dignity, because to restore His work He would have chosen men like Luther and the *Reformers*!

Brethren, I am acquainted with all the objections circulated by writings, diffused by speeches, and hurled at us from all quarters. They say: How believe that Jesus is there, confined in the limited space of the tabernacle, in that small particle under the species of bread, which is no longer bread, and of wine, which is no longer wine? Again the eternal Why and How of the incredulous! Therefore, God cannot do that

which we cannot do? Shall we never be convinced that the power of God passes our comprehension, and that if God did not exceed the limits of our intelligence He would be an impotent God? Because, as Bacon says, "Man does not understand even the all of nothing." This shows us that between God and man there is an abyss, which man cannot pass. My brethren, when we see men add reasoning to reasoning to judge those things which happen beyond our ken, does it not remind us of the astronomer who, after losing his reason, used to mount the steps of a ladder better to examine the heavens? The commonest reason tells us that, human reason being inferior to Divine intelligence, it is by Faith alone that we can embrace the total of things human and divine. They who regard their horizon as the limit of the world, who say there is nothing beyond, do they not seem to you to resemble the fool described by Dante in the 10th Canto of his Paradise? But how, they object, Jesus Christ in that small space, in that small Host? Yes, it is a mystery of Faith. But are there not mysteries in Nature as well as in faith? How is it that Nature, with its verdant plains, its lofty mountains, its starry skies, with all its vast extent of grandeur, can be reflected in my eye, and depicted on my pupil? How is the big tree contained in a tiny seed?

See there, under that citadel, a grain of sand is placed—a little dynamite. What follows? The citadel is blown up. What force in that small grain! Physiologists tell us that matter divides and develops itself infinitely, and is capable of infinite condensation. Remember, my brethren, what Newton and Leibnitz have affirmed: that if we could do away with the laws of gravitation we could hold the world in the hollow of our hand. But how admit of transubstantiation, that is, the change of the bread into the body of Christ, and of the wine into His blood? Does not a substantial mutation take place in us daily? The change of bread and wine into our flesh and blood. Do we not daily observe the mutation of vegetable matter into the flesh and blood of animals, and what God does in the natural order of things, can He not do it upon His altars? Ah, my brethren, let us reflect, before smiling and shaking our heads, for our organic life, which is in itself a mystery of facts, confirms the Eucharistic life, which is a mystery of Faith.

But how, you say, that semblance of bread, where there is no longer bread, how that semblance of wine, where there is no longer wine? Does it seem impossible to you? Listen to S. Thomas: "God can produce the effects of second causes without the concurrence of first causes;

thus He could create man without generation, because His power is infinite, because it is He who gives to all causes their efficacy. God gave, being to first causes, and can therefore produce the effects of second causes without the aid of first causes." In the same manner He can preserve the appearances of bread and wine, although there no longer remain in them the substance of bread or of wine. Have we not the analogy of this fact in the case of petrification. By its action the mineral is substituted for the animal or vegetable substances, which, nevertheless, preserve their primitive form and lineaments. "But," you object, "are there as many Christs as there are particles?" Jesus Christ is found in the bread—not locally, but really and substantially. Now, all that constitutes bread, do you not find it in each crumb of bread? All that constitutes air, do you not find it in every breath of air? All that constitutes water, do you not find it in every drop of water? Besides this, you have an analogical phenomenon before you in the human voice. It, though one in itself, is diversified into many through the channel of your ears. You are many. I say my words once only, and yet you each perceive them in their integrity. And if this happen in the natural order of things, why should it not happen in the supernatural? But what is the use

of discussing this mystery? It will ever remain that which it is—a mystery. Therefore, what remains for us to do? S. Thomas, a monk of incomparable wisdom, is dying; the Holy Eucharist is brought to him, and he is asked: “*Thomas, do you believe in the real presence of God in the Eucharist?*” He joins his hands, and, raising his eyes to the Holy Particle, exclaims: “O, Jesus, King of glory, Thou art He whom I have preached and loved, for Thee have I laboured. Yes, O! yes, I believe it.” And his act of faith was also an act of love.

Two centuries later another monk, dominated by a fearful pride, raised a great tumult in the world. This monk was Luther. Luther denied the cultus of the Virgin and of the saints, he denied prayers for the dead, and the dogma of indulgences. Luther may be called the man of demolition. Well, even this man, on approaching the altar, and opening the tabernacle, exclaims, trembling: “I cannot, I cannot, the words of the text seal my lips; I cannot deny the presence of Christ in the Eucharist.” So that Jesus Christ, between S. Thomas, that angel of light, and Luther, that fallen angel, stands as between two majestic columns. And what shall we do? Prostrate ourselves, brethren, prostrate ourselves and adore.

If Jesus were not in the Eucharist, what must we conclude? It must be either a gift of God or an invention of man. Admitting for an instant the latter theory, to what errors would it not lead? God's love would be full of limits and obstacles; man would have been more powerful to invent than God to give; Jesus, in His love, would have been conquered by man. But this is impossible. God's love surpasses our intelligence, and how could Jesus, living love, pass through the generations of men without giving Himself to us? The Eucharist is the Sacrament of Love. Enquire of your hearts, oh! brethren, for as Bossuet well said, there are not two kinds of love—in the heart of man and in the heart of God; love in the heart of man is like love in the heart of God, only that God's love is infinite love. So that would we know what passes in the heart of God, we have only to place our hand upon our heart, and to its fervent palpitations add the idea of the Infinite. In doing so, we shall feel three separate emotions. The first makes us wish to remain with the loved persons; to this end we are ready to commit even folly and rashness; for this we study how to shorten distance, we invent the steam engine, the telegraph and the telephone, for these inventions are by no means worked out for the exclusive benefit of commerce, but also that of the heart, to enable us

to stay the most we can with those we love. And if we feel this need, we, so narrow-minded, so cold, so selfish, how should not God have felt it, whose love is infinite toward us? He has felt it, for He has exclaimed, "*Deliciæ meæ sunt omnes homines.*" The second emotion which we feel makes us wish to suffer for the people we love; we condescend to the lowly, if poor; we deny and deprive ourselves to aid them; we make sacrifices to satisfy their needs, and to mitigate their pains. This is what we find in all hearts worthy of love. It is found above all in the heart of Jesus. But how could His heart feel the need of suffering? That He felt it, Bethlehem, Gethsemane, and Calvary are clearest proof. The third emotion or feeling of our hearts, is the desire to nourish and aggrandize those whom we love. Where is the father who does not rejoice that by the sweat of his brow he can maintain and feed his children? And we are told that a mother whose milk failed her for her infant, cried in anguish, "O why cannot I nourish him with my blood!" And these sentiments show us our divine origin. Remember the episode in Dante Alighieri's *Inferno*, of Count Ugolini, which, whether historical or merely the creation of the poet, little matters here. Ugolini, Conte della Gheradesca, is shut up with his sons and his nephews to die of starvation.

For three days he remains seated on the ground with his head between his hands, and dares not look upon his dear ones; on the fourth day, when his pains exceed his courage and the signs of approaching death appear, two of his children, stretching toward him their emaciated arms, exclaim, "Father, Father, eat of us!" "*Tu ne vestiti queste misere carni, e tu le spoglia.*" If human nature be capable of similar impulses, how can we wonder in hearing Jesus Christ say, "Take and eat, this is My body; drink this, which is My blood." Such is the Eucharist, the expansion of Infinite love. It is Jesus Christ, the God-Man, who, obeying the impulses of His heart, grants us this extreme consolation to sublimiate ours, and cause us to live by His life. "It is Jesus Christ," saith S. Paul, "who liveth in us."

Therefore my brethren, men may blaspheme the Christian mysteries, when they understand them not; may call them strange when superficially regarded; but when they are well studied and considered, we see that they come from the heart of a God-Man, to raise our own hearts to God. And tears come to our eyes, and the words die on our lips in adoration.

Peroration.—We have yet another proof that God is really present in the Eucharist, and this

lies in the effects which it produces. What are these effects? Light, strength, and life. Who among us does not need light and strength to destroy the empire of evil and to establish that of goodness? The soul of man, after the first sin, has remained debilitated; everything fatigues it, it tires of peace, it tires of strife, it tires of happiness, and, abandoned to itself, it tires even of life. And as to the heart, O poor heart, how weak it is, how easily vice takes root in it, and with what difficulty virtue thrives in it. The human heart, according to the energetic words of S. Paul, is as though sold to sin. Therefore we need light, we need strength, and where shall we find them? In human nature? No! "Man," saith the Scripture, "is a blade of grass." Where, then, shall we find them? In the Eucharist, where Jesus is, the Light of God—*Christus Lumen de Lumine*—the Strength of God, *Christus de Dei virtute*. The soul which communicates, which receives Jesus into itself, unites itself to God in a sweet embrace. And that the Eucharist imparts a superhuman power to the soul is proved by the marvellous creations called Eucharistical Creations. And which is the first of these creations? The Priest. The priest as confessor, the priest as host, the priest as victim, conformable to the idea of the Church. What produced those miracles of

goodness and charity, the Priests Cottolengo and Dom Bosco of our day? The Eucharist. The Eucharist and the Priest are two terms answering to each other; without the Priest you would not have the Eucharist, and without the Eucharist you would not have the Priest. Where the bread of the strong or the Eucharist is wanting, we miss the Angel who enlightens and strengthens our souls. The second creation of the Eucharist is the Virgin. The Virgin, pure poetry of goodness, who, by maintaining the sanctity of the Sacrifice, sheds, as it were, a celestial aroma upon humanity. Who can help acknowledging the dignity of consecrated persons? Even the Roman Emperors, who trampled upon so much majesty, paused reverently on their way, to let the Vestals pass. If we enter the hospitals, and see those gentle women, the Sisters of Charity and Providence, do we not feel overcome by respect and admiration? Do we not feel inclined to bow before them as celestial creatures?

Our poor separated brethren, not having the blood of Christ in the Eucharist, have failed to create a true Sister of Charity. They have tried to imitate this glory of ours, but in vain. These Angels upon earth, who tear themselves from their mothers' arms, who renounce all present sweetness, all future joys, to pass their lives by the side of

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the sick and the miserable, whose daily object is to call to their lips that hopeful smile which acts like balsam on the sick and suffering—Angels such as these can only be found round the altars of the Eucharist.

There is one other creation of the Eucharist, the martyr. There are martyrs for liberty and martyrs for religion, but how great is the difference? The martyrs of liberty die upon barricades, bayonet in hand; the martyrs of religion, bearing the olive branch of peace. Remember the bloody days of ancient times. What sustained the courage of those men in the face of the tigers and panthers of the amphitheatre? What gave courage to those babes, whose tender limbs were hewn to pieces by the scimitars of the unbelievers, so that they fell like the flowers of the field under the ruthless scythe? What supported and encouraged those men, who cried, “We are Christians, we are Christians,” who after partaking of their “last supper” in the Catacombs were led to the amphitheatre to die, and whose courage astonished the Proconsul? For while the gladiators studied only how to die gracefully, the Christians died with ecstasy. What sustained them in their heroic sacrifice of life for the Faith? The Eucharist! The monk is also another creation of the Eucharist. My brethren,

it is not long since I spoke to you of the monks who live on the heights of S. Bernard. Through nine or ten centuries has this race of heroes been perpetuated. They fear not the loss of their sight from the dazzling whiteness of those eternal snows, they fear not the loss of their lives in the abysses and crevasses ever opening under their feet while seeking the traces of lost travellers. What is it inspires these men, what strengthens them? Every year they make a vow; this vow they make on Christmas night after having communicated. And when I asked one of them if he dreaded the perils which at every moment threaten them, he, showing me an avalanche which was then falling, exclaimed, "How should we fear those avalanches, while we have received in our breasts that avalanche of strength, which is the body of Jesus!" Here is their secret. For this, also, S. Vincent de Paul said to his sisters, "When you have received Jesus, when you have communicated, do you not feel an ardent desire to sacrifice yourselves on behalf of your brethren?"

Lastly, there is another creation—the Apostle. See that youthful apostle, who tears himself from the arms of his desolate mother, leaves his country, crosses the ocean, advances boldly into

barbarous countries, and among savage tribes ! What is it which inspires his mind with the desire of bearing the light to those savage tribes ? The Eucharist, which he daily receives. And further, what gives man the strength of conversion ? It often happens, oftener than you imagine, that a man, after having led a life of error and vice, desires to return, desires to amend his life ; but his past alarms him, his passions enchain him, he deems it impossible to break his chain. One day, by a mighty and noble effort, he throws himself at the feet of the priest, confesses, obtains his pardon, and goes to the altar. Look at him again, you know him not, he is no longer himself ; to-day he venerates what yesterday he desecrated, he now adores what he trampled on before. There exists in us an inner life, a life of the heart which has need of encouragement and strength to raise our souls above their weaknesses. To encourage with good words, to give good counsels, to show by our example the beauty of goodness, is well—but it is not enough. We say to the perverted, virtue is beautiful, vice is ugly. They know it better than we do. Let us then leave our phrases, or, rather, send them to gain strength in the Christian religion. He who communicates not, “has no life in him,” for the true

life is something to be felt, tasted, possessed, and which makes us exclaim, "I am happy, I am happy." And, my brethren, is it life, living tormented by constant unsatisfied desires, following a phantasm of pleasure, which ever flies mockingly away from us? Is it life to waste our faculties on matter, on gold? Is it living, to spend a life in feverish inebriety which leaves only shame and remorse of conscience behind it? Is life worth living, always menaced by the sword of justice or the sword of God? No! this is not living; it is suffering, languishing, the dragging of a heavy chain, of our own fabrication. And this is the life of the man who believes not, of the man who communicates not. And at his end, this man must say, "Alas for me, I have never lived, I have always suffered, and caused others to suffer."

Oh, my brethren, what an existence, what a heart, what an imagination, what tendencies! Look at him; it makes one shudder. He sees everything sad and gloomy within him. His mind is full of the unmixed gall of human nature. In that heart, there is no God, to calm the tempest. But, oh, brethren, do not let him perish; let us pray for him. And you, oh, my straying brethren, return to the arms of your Father, for are you

not the children of God? Evoke past memories, remember your first communion, which you made with the enthusiasm of youth, as if it were the most beautiful feast of life. Remember that there will be for you yet another communion, on the day when you lie on your deathbed! Between the first of your best days, and the last, which may be even to-morrow, oh, let there be yet another, to-day! Perhaps it is ten or twenty years since you have reconciled yourself to God. Oh, return to the God of your youth, and make your communion—make it, and you will find your reward in your heart, in your family, and in your country. Do you know, brethren, why the nations are troubled and the people are convulsed? Because Jesus is no longer with them. Because He is exiled from their hearts, from their families, from their laws, from their morals, and from their institutions! Oh, brethren, where Jesus Christ does not exist, where there is no longer the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, there exists instead the sacrifice of man. Yes, this is no exaggeration. History proves it. You know that not long since a nation declared itself atheist. Crosses were broken, tabernacles profaned, but when the blood of Jesus ceased upon the altars, the guillotine appeared on the public place. Yes,

brethren, when man is no longer nourished by the blood of Christ, he suffers from a brutal thirst, he is tormented by brutal appetites, he thirsts after human blood. There is nought but the blood of the living God which can save us and society from this catastrophe!

XXVIII.

CONFESSION AND PENANCE.

Exordium.—Religion, which is founded on Faith, Hope, and Charity, requires an institution, an institution specially adapted, which shall, so to speak, reassume all other institutions, and cause it to take root in the heart of humanity. And this institution, gathering all powers to itself, attracting all energies, uniting all living men in one continuous work and labour, is that of Confession and Penitence. Yes, *confession* is to Christianity a kind of incarnation—it is the point, the centre toward which converge all the thoughts and words of our Saviour.

From the manger to Calvary, no matter where He goes, or what be the subject of discourse, He preaches nothing but repentance, and draws men to Him by the ways of repentance only. And, mark you, those men His disciples. The morrow of the Crucifixion, those men who had seen His blood flow, who had witnessed the junction of the two testaments, what do they do on descending the holy mountains? Where do they go? They go

into all the world, teaching men, and telling nations that a God-man has died for the saving of sinners—that is to say, they go about the world bearing absolution and pardon, and the world is absolved, and mankind is pardoned. Confession is a masterpiece of the bounty and mercy of Christ; it is all that can be imagined in the way of perfection for the participation of man in the aims and object of redemption. And yet no dogma has been more disputed. Everything has been urged against this doctrine. It is said not to have any foundation in the Gospel, that it is an invention of the thirteenth century, a tyranny, a massacre of conscience, and that it ought to be abolished. But, brethren, is this true? Let us examine it calmly, without prejudice, without preconceptions, because we only seek the truth, and there is nothing more obnoxious to truth than prejudice and preconceived notions. And truth alone can console and save us.

Is it true that Confession has no foundation in Scripture?

I open the Gospel of St. John, and I find precisely these words: “As the Father has sent me, even so send I you.” “*Sicut misit me pater, ed ego mitto vos,*” and further: “Receive ye the Holy Spirit.”—“*Ecce, accipite Spiritum Sanc-*

tum.”—“Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained.” “*Quorum remisseritis peccata, et ego remittam, quorum retinueritis, peccata, et ego retinebo.*”

According to these words of Jesus Christ there are believers whose sins will be remitted, and others whose sins will be retained. We must then necessarily discern between them, to see to whom they must be forgiven and to whom not. But in order to make this distinction it is necessary to form a judgment, and to form this judgment we must be acquainted with the sins and the disposition of mind of the sinner. Otherwise it would be a judgment without cognition of cause. But how are we to know the sins and disposition of mind of the sinner without confession? Therefore it is false that confession has no foundation in the Gospel.

But, they say, Christ did not impose upon us the duty of confession! But, if not, what would be the power of His apostles? It would be a ridiculous and illusory power—a ridiculous power! What would you say of a man who boasted of a power he could not exercise? You would laugh at him. At the same time it would be an illusory power. An illusory power is a power from which we can withdraw, or to which we can submit our-

selves at will, without any right of complaint on the part of him who exercises it. Such would be the power of the priest if there were not the necessity for confession among Christians, and Jesus Christ would have given an illusory power to His apostles. But, you say, the priest could absolve and retain sins without the penitents being obliged to tell their sins. But this would be a blind power, a capricious power, and a tyrannical power. The priest would pronounce a sentence without knowing who it regarded. He would follow only the impulse of the moment. He would go into the world and say: I forgive your sins, and yours I retain, without motive or reason. Could one imagine anything more absurd? Therefore it is evident that solely because Jesus Christ said, "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them," only on account of this we must conclude that sins must be judged. But if they must be judged they must be known, and to be known they must be heard, and so we explain the necessity of confession.

But notwithstanding these clear proofs they continue to say that confession is a human invention. And I answer, *Impossible!* Weigh well this word *impossible*, and take it in its strictest sense. For they who call it a human invention must maintain that there was a time

when Christians did not confess, and, indeed, this is what is constantly said. Well, this is my reasoning. Men confess now, therefore they always confessed. And I pretend that these two propositions are indisputable, and the second is derived from the first. I will prove it to you. That men confess in the present day no one can doubt, and this among all nations, in Italy, in France, in Belgium, and in Spain, wherever the Catholic Church is established, and in so doing, the faithful do not think so much of performing an act of piety as of fulfilling an obligation imposed by God. Therefore the faithful have always confessed, because they have believed confession to be a divine institution. They say that confession has been invented by the Church, but this supposition is absurd, because it must have been invented all at once, or gradually. If all at once, it would be the same as saying, "Yesterday evening Christians had never heard confession spoken of as an indispensable means of grace ordained by Christ toward obtaining the pardon of our sins, but this night they have all dreamed that it was so ordained, and have further dreamed that their fathers were subject to it."

But no less absurd is the supposition that it was introduced by degrees, because supposing that a priest had desired to introduce it into his

parish, do you think that his parishioners would have made no objection to a new ordinance? Do you think they would not have said, Why impose upon us a yoke which our fathers bore not? Has the way to heaven become narrower? But even supposing that a priest had been found clever enough to persuade his congregation, would he have succeeded in rendering the practice universal? How could he make society, and nations and empires, and the world in general accept a similar innovation? Is it an easy thing to make a man accept without examination that which is contrary to his pride and his passions? If Christians were not certain that confession is imposed upon us by the authority of God, never would one man kneel to another to confide to him secrets of which he himself is ashamed in his inmost soul.

The very silence of history concerning this institution is another proof in its favour. For when Luther lifted up his voice against it, Confession owned the faith and obedience of the world. Every people, the Latins, as the Greeks, bowed down before the tribunal of penitence. Brethren, if it were a human inventions we should know the name of the inventor, the age in which it was invented, the place in which it was first practised. History tells us of the invention of

things of but small importance, of the time and place of their invention. Why then should it not have recorded the particulars of an invention of such importance, and which has exercised so great an influence on the minds and hearts of men? This silence proves that confession is not a human institution—to try to prove it so would be an absurdity.

But there is yet another impossibility: the pride of princes. These proud ones of the earth, they who have demanded seats in ecclesiastical councils, who have rebelled against their decisions, why have they gone, a docile flock, to kneel before a poor priest, a poor monk of their people, without making any resistance? To do so they must have acted either spontaneously or by compulsion. If by compulsion, who compelled them? In either case, why has history not spoken of their capitulation, and their docility in this respect? They cannot take a step, or speak a word, without its being proclaimed, and repeated, and echoed through centuries; and shall they have smitten their breasts in the presence of a priest, the son perhaps of some poor artisan, without history's taking notice of the fact?

But if this is not sufficient, there is another impossibility in the way, and this is the vigilance of our enemies. The Church has always had

enemies, and always will have. These, her enemies, have always kept their eyes open to review all her acts, and their ears to hear all her words. Every decision of the Church has been the signal for great struggles, producing, beside volumes of writings, combats which have left even traces of blood.

Well, brethren, and when the inventor of confession proposed his theory, how is it that this novelty was never opposed by the vanity of the sectarian? How is it that no enemy of Rome raised his voice against this Roman innovation? What shall we answer to this objection? We can only answer it by epigrams, or romance, but common sense is insulted by what is false and not convinced. Again, if confession be a human invention, who invented it? The faithful. But they would not have invented what humbled their pride, and contradicted their passions.

Then the priests must have invented it. O! yes, the priests! But they are men as you are, and men always act from some motive. And why should priests have invented confession? Perhaps for their interest? No one would dare to affirm such a thing. All well know that nothing is paid for confession. Look over your bills, you will not find the account of the priest among them. Would it then be for pleasure? A fine pleasure truly

—to spend the day shut up between four boards, listening to the monotonous tale of human passions, or the narration of facts which make one shudder! A fine pleasure to have to get up at night to hear the confession of the dying! A great enjoyment truly to visit the patients in cholera time and take the germs of the disease together with their confession. A pleasure which no one will envy.

Therefore for what motive could they have invented it? *For the discovery of family secrets.* Do you not perceive the vulgarity of this accusation? Do you not know that the priest must risk his life rather than reveal what he hears in confession? And then are you obliged to go to a priest who knows your family? Do you not know that the priest not only cannot ask you your name, but not even that of your accomplice?

Therefore try another motive—*the desire of ruling over consciences.* O, friends, if the priest had invented confession, he would have found some means of dispensing himself from it, but on the contrary, priests, monks, bishops, cardinals, and popes, all confess as much as you do and more to obtain the pardon of their own sins.

Therefore be persuaded. No, no. Confession is no invention of the clergy, the priest would not

invent that which, humanly speaking, he would gladly dispense with.

And, in fact, the moment that the priest becomes an apostate, he preaches against confession.

Impossible, therefore, for all these reasons, and more utterly impossible on account of the evidence, through tradition, of its *divine* origin.

The great enemy of confession, unable to find its inventor, says: I have discovered it. Make way for him; he is a man of fame, of distinction. He was brought up in the shades of a monastery. But having one day seen an image of human beauty, he followed it, preferring it to divine beauty, and confession opposing his desires, he cries, "Down with Confession," and declares to have discovered that it was invented by the priests. And by whom, think you? By Innocent the Third in the fourth Lateran Council.

Magnificent discovery of a man who was

"a Dio spiacente ed ai nemici sui."

But let us see if he was right.

He says that confession was invented by Innocent the Third, in the fourth Lateran Council, and yet, during the period which elapsed between the time of Innocent and Luther, no shadow of contradiction appears.

The Lateran Council does not say, *You must*

confess. It says, *You must confess at least once a year.* And this proves that confession already existed, for the Council does not treat of it as of a new precept, but makes a regulation as for a precept already existing. Therefore the Lateran Council does not institute confession; it only proves its previous existence. In fact, we find confession even among those of our brethren who are separated from us by schism. It is found in that of Photius, and among the Copts (?) among the Greeks, as well as among the Latins. Therefore confession existed before their separation from us. Thus it is false that it was invented by the Lateran Council, and to say so is to teach an untruth. But starting from that Council and retracing our steps to the time of the apostles, we find infinite testimony to the existence of confession. And first of all that which presents itself is that of S. Barnabas, disciple of S. Paul, who says to the converted Jews, "Confess your sins." And this he says in a letter which is found in the collection of the writings of the apostolic fathers. Therefore, my brethren, confession was not invented by man; it is a divine invention, and as such we ought to value and make use of it. Therefore we ought to confess.

"But I confess to God," it is said, "and that is enough for me." And if it were not enough? Tell

me, my friends, to whom does it appertain to establish the conditions of pardon? Our offended God has put this condition before giving us the pardon of our sins. He wills that we should present ourselves to His ministers because it appertains to them to remit or to retain sins. You say, "I confess to God." But, my brethren, in one sense this confession is useless, because God knows us better than others. Beside which confession would not be efficacious to preserve us from falls, it would have no expiatory virtue. God does not assume a countenance, a personality, a human voice to tell us that He pardons us, and to give us counsel and warning. Even after we have confessed to God we remain uncertain of pardon; we remain as we were before. But when you kneel and confess your faults to the confessor, you do not speak to the man, but to the representative of God: it is in His name that the priest hears you, in His name that he speaks to you, it is in the name of God that he absolves you.

Besides, why not speak openly? Confess to God! Ask your conscience; I know well what mine answers me! When a man says this, he does not really confess, even to God. Ah, when I did not confess to men, I did not confess to God. S. Augustine says: "Do not say that you do penitence in secret, because then it would have

been in vain that God gave His apostles the power of remitting and retaining sins. As sins committed before baptism are cancelled by it, so those committed after baptism are cancelled by confession, and not being able to apply ourselves personally to God, we ought to apply to His priests, who are the ministers of His bounty, pardon, and mercy. But cannot the priest repeat what he hears in confession? Oh, no! this is impossible. Christians have now confessed for nineteen centuries, and such a fact has never occurred; the confidence of penitents proves it, and S. Augustine says, "I know less about what I have heard in confession than about other things which I know not at all." S. Thomas says that the seal of confession is inviolable. S. John Nepomucene bore testimony to it with his blood, and Marmontel, who says, "How is it that no priest ever presented himself before the revolutionary tribunals in the character of an accuser?" The trials and misfortunes of the Church also bear witness to it, which, if they have turned some into persecutors, have never made them accusers. There have been some unfortunate examples of apostate priests who had the courage to become the enemies of the precious blood which they themselves had consecrated, but the sacred seal of confession arrested even these, and they revealed nothing heard in confession. Yes, God

was betrayed by them, and man respected: the oath made to God was violated, but not the confidence of man. So it seems as though God had taken the secret of confession under His especial protection, defending it in a special manner. "But, Father, confession is so painful!" Not so much as you think, for if there is pain in confession, there is also comfort and consolation, and the consolation is greater than the pain. Indeed, we may say that there are two sides to confession; one sad and painful, and another consoling and joyful. The first part consists of three acts: an act of humility, by which a man approaches the tribunal of penitence and says to the priest, "Father, bless me, for I have sinned;" then an act of sacrifice; finally an act of obedience in which he bows his head and receives his penance.

But then comes the happier part, the consoling part; and this also consists of three things: the consolation itself, light, and pardon. Yes, in confession we find these three things, *comfort*, *light*, and *pardon*.

In the first place, we find *consolation*. And who is there, my friends, who does not need in this world a little consolation? We all need it. But where find real consolation? Perhaps in human beings. The ancients knew this sad side of human

nature, and one of their poets said, "If you are happy and honoured, you will have many friends; but if the wind changes, if a dark cloud falls on your head, your friends will soon disappear, and you will be left alone." And even if we are not alone, even if we have some friend, are there not sorrows which we cannot tell to anyone; and are not those the worst and most agonizing of which we speak the least? Are there not troubles which kill the soul, while a smile plays round the mouth, and a garland of flowers surrounds the head? These people suffer from sorrows which are all the more poignant because they cannot be confided to anyone. Their heart conceals a horrible secret, perhaps a crime, and there are crimes so unendurable as to cause death. How many, indeed, have remained oppressed under their burdens because they have not found words to deliver their heart and to let out their sorrows?

One day some persons were observed in a brilliant assemblage with tears in their eyes. They were asked, "Wherefore do you weep in the midst of such gaiety?" And one of them replied, "I weep, because even in such festive gatherings I feel myself solitary." This is the history of many. And the world, what can the world do? The world, with its feasts, with its prestige, with its fascinations, can do nothing,

absolutely nothing. For in the world there is intercourse, interchange of civilities and of compliments, but the communication of minds is ignored. There is no interchange of the secrets of the heart in the world ; minds touch each other externally, but do not penetrate further. And thus it is that we find ourselves alone, alone in a crowd, alone in an assembly, more alone than in solitude itself. And all the while the first need of the soul is sympathy. On certain days especially man alone cannot bear the burden of his poor heart ; there are times when he feels the need of spreading out his grief ; he needs to tell his tale of woe to the ear of a friend, that it may not crush and overwhelm him.

Who among you has never felt such a need ? Who of you, who amid pains and griefs and tribulation, has not felt the need of a heart into which to shed the bitterness of his own heart. Oh, no, man cannot be alone. “ Woe to him who is alone,” saith the Scripture. Your heart cannot live alone, and you give it affections ; your intelligence cannot exist alone, and you give it knowledge, neither can your conscience exist alone. Do you know the bitterness of a solitary conscience ? Its grief is that of a man who finds himself in a foreign country, where his language is unknown, so that he cannot be understood or

heard by anyone. And this anguish is such that criminals have been known to take refuge in woods and, under cover of night, to confide their crimes to the trees and the plants. This feeling is so strong that even a monster has been seen bending over the cradle of an infant, who is smiling placidly in its sleep, and crying to it, "It was I—I who killed your mother!"

Therefore all proves to us that man feels the need of confiding his deeds and the secrets of his conscience to another man!

But to whom shall we trust them?

To our natural fathers? Impossible; we should not have **the** courage—they would curse us.

To our mothers? Impossible; it would cause their death.

To a friend? Impossible; we should lose him instantly.

No, and not even to the purest angel, because it seems to me that not even an angel could endure such revelations.

It was, therefore, worthy of Jesus Christ to make Himself, by means of His ministers, the secret consoler of souls; it was worthy of Jesus Christ to establish a secret place where we could carry our faults and our sorrows—a secret place where a true commerce of souls might take place; on one hand the confession of secrets, on the other

consolation and advice. And this takes place in the confessional. There all veils are drawn away ; there is said what a son would not have the courage to say to his father, a daughter to her mother, a wife to her husband, a friend to a friend : there one says that which one has in one's heart, and feels the lighter for it and consoled. But confession not only affords comfort, but also enlightenment. I do not speak of public enlightenment, of the universal enlightenment which comes from the schools, which shines out of Gospel truth ; no, no, I speak of that inward enlightening, of that confidential and intimate light which we need, and which may save us even from crimes. "Know thyself," wrote the ancient sage, "know thyself." This is a most important knowledge. But who shall help us to know ourselves ? My brethren, after you have begun to take a few steps in the world, your father, your mother often hesitate to enlighten you, and if they hesitate, will you find friends who will do it ? O, do not reckon upon them much ; that which happened to me will have happened also to you. You meet a man, and you say, "Do you happen to know So-and-so ?" "Oh, yes, I know him well ; he was a friend of my childhood." "Well, then, you ought to warn him of this or that." What will

he reply. "Oh, he is my friend, but I cannot take upon myself a similar responsibility."

Do you see that woman? All speak of her worldliness, of her vanity. She is a woman about to lose herself; is it possible that no one will warn that woman? You try to make her sensible of it, but you do not succeed.

Where, then, find this enlightenment, brethren? Ah, it was worthy of Christ to establish a secret place where that light might be found; it was worthy of Jesus Christ to provide us with a tender, affectionate, and paternal voice which should bring us this light, and save us from dishonour and misfortune. And it is found there in the confessional; it is found in the dialogue which takes place between the penitent and the priest. "Ah, my Father, my Father, I am proud." It is true, my son, you are proud, profoundly proud; arm yourself against your pride. Listen to this woman: "Father, father, I am overcome by vanity, by worldliness, by the desire of being seen and admired in every place." It is true, it is true, my daughter. In you there are these defects; guard yourself against them, because otherwise they may carry you further than you would.

This sort of enlightenment you will never find

in the world, or in friendship, this light which you will scarcely find in your father and your mother.

The priest places you before yourself, and his words, his counsels serve to make you know yourself. But even more—in confession, beside consolation and enlightenment, we also find pardon. My brethren, who does not need pardon? We all need it, but where, O, where to find it? The first time that Jesus Christ raised His hand to pardon there was a movement of surprise and wonder in the world. “Who is this that forgiveth sins? God alone can forgive sins.” They were right. God alone can pardon sin.

Society does not pardon; society strikes and dishonours, but does not pardon. It condemns you, and when you have paid your penalty leaves you to drag out a miserable and ignoble existence; it does not rehabilitate you. Neither does the world pardon. A man may be anything but a villain, but when once its ignominy has fallen upon him, when human justice has condemned him, nothing raises him again.

Neither does conscience pardon: we may have arrived at the last rung of the ladder of power, but if we have mounted it by iniquitous or unjust means, our conscience will awake us even under gilded curtains, in order to whisper, “You are

feared, you are respected, but you are nothing but a wretch."

God only can pardon.

O, brethren, to know ourselves pardoned, to feel ourselves pardoned ; what a consolation, what a joy ! This—this is the masterpiece of confession. It is there that remorse is silent ; there that a sweet calm enters into our mind.

You know that he who does evil is condemned to bear a constant remorse within him.

In the ingenious language of Socrates, God has fastened pleasure and suffering to the same chain, for which reason we cannot find pleasure without pain. In like manner, we may say that God has attached crime and remorse to the same chain, for which reason where one is the other follows, and however deeply a crime may be hidden in the most intimate fibres of the heart, remorse surrounds, closes upon, and torments it. Can a man destroy these remorseful feelings ? I do not know, but I know that when a man has preserved any amount of dignity remorse lacerates him ; remorse is the only remains of the sentiment of honour which is left him. There are, it is true, many men who try to suffocate this remorse, but it often happens that suffocated remorse prepares a hidden mine in the mind, which menaces ever to tear the heart and destroy it by some sudden explosion.

And where shall we find the remedy; how hinder these explosions? Confession; it alone is like a safety valve.

Do you see that steam-engine which flies along the rail, carrying those heavy cars? It is the steam enclosed in the boiler which impels the engine; but should the pressure of the steam be too strong the engine bursts, and then good-bye to carriages, travellers, and merchandise. In order to avoid these disasters, a small aperture, called the safety valve, is set in the engine. If the valve opens in time all is safe, but should it by any accident remain closed, the explosion takes place, and ruin.

Thus, dear brethren, thus it is with our hearts. Under the pressure of grief, under the pressure of remorse, it is about to burst. Confession is the safety valve. If employed bytimes, all is saved; if neglected, you will see—madness follows, and suicide!

O, brethren, how many persons are saved by the confessional, and after being pardoned, after having smitten their breasts, have felt the need of crying, “Thanks, Father, thanks, you have done me a great good; you have saved me, now I feel myself better. I was about to be lost; I wished to take away my life. My life was an intolerable burden to me. Take, Father—What

is this? It is poison which I wanted to use for myself, but now I no longer desire it." These are our experiences.

O, brethren, the ill that those have done who have kept the poor from confession! O, the evil that they have done to families, to society, and, above all, to souls!

O, how many victims in families! O, how many poor widows could say, "Restore my husband to me, restore the father to his children. You it is who have taken him away from me; you who have killed him, because you have reduced him to desperation. If you had not led him away from the church, from the confessional, he would have gone to kneel down at the feet of the priest. He would have asked pardon of God; he would have had a little consolation, and I should still have a husband; my sons would still have a father."

O, how many poor orphans could cry to them, "Give us back our mother; you took her away, you led her astray, and in a moment of despair she drowned herself. If she had been more religious she would have remained here with us, and would not have left us alone, poor orphans."

And how many other guilty ones could say to those, "We are guilty, but we are not the real culprits. These are you who have urged us on to

crime ; you came with your words, with your sarcasms, with your smiles, and placed yourselves between us and religion, between us and the priest. Yes, we are guilty, but we are not the only guilty."

Such is the evil they do to society. We are horrified by the crimes which multiply in its bosom. But whence come these crimes?—from the heart? Yes, brethren, it is in the heart that all crimes are prepared.

Virtue ought to find a foundation in the heart. But how command the heart ?

Who can reach into the depths of the heart to purify it, to render it good ? The laws ? O, the laws do not succeed. They can oppose a dyke to the torrent of crime, but they cannot dry up the source of it, for human laws relate only to eternal actions, not to the thoughts or desires. This special power is only given to religion, and religion exercises it more especially in the confessional, because it is there that the heart is revealed to the priest, who heals it, and absolves, cutting out and burning all that is vitiated in it ; it is there that the minister of God, penetrating into the conscience, suffocates the evil affections and evil thoughts, inspiring it with the love of duty and virtue, and giving to the heart and spirit a new life, a new strength. Can you find any

public, private, or material interest which is not protected by confession ?

Confession protects authority against insubordination, protects subjects against the abuse of power, it protects parents from the disobedience of children, and children against the harshness or injustice of parents ; confession protects life, innocence, and property, and against the passions which agitate the human heart.

Ah, those who cry out against confession do not know what they owe to it.

Without confession dishonour would be their lot, and weigh down the hearts of those dearest to them ; without confession injustice long ago would have seized their property ; without confession a dagger would long ago have put an end to their miserable life.

O, how many crimes avoided, how many hatreds extinguished are owed to confession. Who can doubt it ? Even Rousseau acknowledged it. The benefits are so clear and so evident that many impose confession on their subordinates. Its benefits are so great and so evident that even Protestants have recognized that it is a work of great wisdom.

And when, through hatred of the Church, confession was abolished, history narrates that soon after the world was inundated by crimes, and

Charles the Fifth was implored to re-establish it as the only means of escape from entire corruption. I could also speak of certain impious authors who have recognized the great importance of confession for the good of society. One of them says : " Confession is a powerful curb against crimes and human passions." Another affirms that confession brings peace to governments and people.

People may cry out as much as they will against confession and against truth. Truth does not heed their cries, and pursues her triumphal march. Another thing which confession renders us is *Innocence*. Great God ! is not this another necessity of man ? Till we are assured of having reacquired innocence we cannot have any peace, and a sense of disturbance troubles our mind.

By what means can we acquire innocence ?

Go, friends, if you will, and ask for absolution of your faults of all the tribunals on the earth, of the tribunal of justice, of that of power, and of that of opinion. Let us suppose that Virtue and Vice are summoned before the Court of Justice, let us suppose that Virtue loses her suit, as only too often happens. You are really the guilty party, but through the ability of your advocate, or through other circumstances, you triumph and are recognized innocent. The representative of justice, believing himself sufficiently enlightened,

interrogates his conscience, and, placing his hand on his heart, says, "Go, you are innocent." But at the same time that this voice sounds in your ears, you hear a voice in your soul which cries, "No, thou art nothing but a miserable wretch." You appeal to the tribunal of opinion; the tribunal acknowledges you innocent. So that you are a just man in the eyes of all, all hold you for an honest man; but does your conscience echo the verdict? No! Go before Emperors, and Kings and Presidents of Republics, say to them, "Rise and show your power," but can they make an innocent man of a guilty one. None of them can do it. Must we therefore be constrained to bear, like Cain, the weight of crime for ever on our soul?

There is one, O, brethren, who has this power and who has received it from God—the priest; he can pardon crime and recall innocence. See him in his tribunal, seated there like a king; he can call to himself those who have need of pardon, those also whom society rejects, and he says to them: "O, you who have sinned, you who have remorseful consciences, come, come—I can pardon all faults; do not go away." Yes, brethren, he can pardon all faults. We need not say with Cain, "My sin is too great for pardon." Let us not do this injury to the Lord, for however great are our

sins, the mercy of God is greater. Did not Jesus come into the world to seek sinners? Did not Jesus allow Himself to be called the friend of sinners? Is it not Jesus who, like the shepherd, goes in search of the lost sheep? Was not Jesus prefigured in the father of the prodigal? Is it not Jesus who says that in heaven there is more joy over a converted sinner than over ninety-nine just persons? "Therefore, my God, thou wilt pardon me." "Yes, My son, it is My bounty which pardons all." "How, thou still callest me son. How, thou art still my Father. I have committed so many faults, I have done so many iniquities!" "But I have forgotten them all; look behind thee, and thou shalt see the traces of My blood and of thy tears which have cancelled everything." Who can then describe the ecstasy of that soul? It can be felt, but not described. It is the sweetest spectacle that the heart of a sinner can desire. I thank thee, O, my God, I thank thee for having taught me to know sin, and for having allowed me to assist at this wonderful sight. As an Apostle, I have seen the sinner shed tears of penitence; I have seen him when the comforting words sank into his soul and caused his face to shine; I have seen him, brethren, I have seen him at the moment in which innocence triumphed and vivified his heart as the dew refreshes the withered

flower. I have felt almost tempted to say, "O, happy error, which causes so much beatitude." One can almost envy the happiness of the repentant sinner. And to think how many are kept back from this tribunal of penitence. O, what a misfortune to be deprived of so many consolations and of such a holy remedy. But what a tyranny above all to prevent others from availing themselves of it. For there are men so cruel as to keep the priest away from a soul tormented by remorse. There are those who would keep from the confessional wavering virtue which seeks for encouragement and strength. There are those so cruel as to tear this solace away from an unhappy man, even at the day and hour of his death; they would torture thus a father, a wife, a son, a brother, or a friend of their childhood who desires to turn to God for the obtaining of pardon. And then they talk of liberty! Even supposing confession were but an illusion, a farce, as some affirm, why should they rob them of it, since it is a comfort to the erring and a consolation to the dying.

And we, brethren, let us not be seduced either by words or writings. If you have withdrawn from this sacred ordinance, return speedily. Do your passions hinder you from going? But is there anything to be ashamed at in it? Put your passions on one side, and if a sacrifice be necessary,

let us make it, especially in these days which remind us of the great sacrifice made to save our souls.

Hear you not that tearful voice which after eighteen centuries still sounds in the silence of the night. It is the voice of Jesus Christ agonizing in Gethsemane: "Father," said Jesus, "Father, let Thy will and not Mine be done." Well, brethren, let us also raise our eyes to heaven and say, "Yea, O, Jesus, let Thy will be done. Thou wouldst that I should confess my sins, and I will confess them."

Let us do His will; let us confess, and so through His blood we shall find pardon, and with pardon we shall find peace, and not only peace, but joy and felicity.

XXIX.

INDIFFERENCE.

Exordium.—A fearful strife, my brethren, is raging in the world, the strife between good and evil, virtue and vice, between the law of God and the licentiousness of man. This strife is both within us and without—within, because we have within us two contrary individualities, the carnal and the spiritual, and without, because there exists two worlds, one that of the children of God, and the other that of the followers of the age. And the Advent of Christ, the sublime Peacemaker, of Jesus, of whom it is written, “He is Peace,” has by no means ended this strife, but rather increased it, by imposing on our reason a heavier responsibility and a higher aim for our virtue. The strife is not always the same in form: it presents itself under various aspects, and under different characters, although motivated ever by the same enemy.

In primary ages it was superstition, the sword, fire, and death; in the age of triumph, heresy aspiring to the perversion of the world; in the age


of ignorance, brutal passion; in the age of imperial supremacy, servility; in the age of intellectual rebellion, spiritual licence; and in our own age—what is it? Indifference, producing various effects, but all tending to the destruction of Religion. In our age there is not a single heresy which, however false, is not considered as a faith. Our day is not the day of corrupt passions which, while rebelling against the law, are lacerated by remorse, thus opening the way to rehabilitation. Our age is one of no less corruption, but of less remorse. In our age the spirit of rebellion is less acute, less violently let loose against Religion. No man dares to say what was said by an unhappy man in the last century: “Let us crush the Infamous One.” Our age imitates rather the conduct of perverse and disobedient children. We are far from Religion, through tranquil prejudice, through calm indifference. The men of our age believe, but detained by certain prejudices believe that they can remain in their indifference.

Brethren, I would endeavour this morning to dissipate some of these prejudices, that the light of truth may reach the minds of those who have strayed from it, and I would do so with all charity, for the minister of the Gospel should love all, but more especially the erring, as having a higher claim on his charity, because they are unhappy.

There are those who wonder that there should be any indifferent or unbelievers among us. But after all that we have seen and heard, amid the delicate circumstances through which we have passed, the wonder is rather that there should not be more. And instead of lamenting, let us raise our hands to Heaven, and implore the good God to send us a ray of His light, to send us an army of apostles of charity, and to make us, by His charity, lovers of the Truth.

Brethren, what is the first prejudice against Religion? That *Religion is old*. "What you preach, father," said an officer to me three years ago, "what you preach is good, but they are things of other times: religion is become old-fashioned." Strange, indeed, that our age, with its mania for all that is ancient, should reprove Religion for its antiquity. Do we reprove an old man for his crown of grey hairs? No! His hoary crown acquires for him our respect and veneration.

Religion is old. Yes, brethren, through an uninterrupted series of pastors, and of pontiffs, through ages of barbarity and ignorance, as well as those of science and civilization; through ages of favour and protection, as well as ages of persecution and of triumph, it reaches back to Calvary, to the death of Jesus Christ upon the Cross.



When following the history of the chosen people, we trace it up to Moses and Aaron and Sinai, and pursue it further still, through the caves of the prophets and the tents of the patriarchs to the cradle of the human race, whence, spreading its dove-like wings, it rises to Heaven, to rest in the bosom of God, from whom it came and to whom it will return. Yes, *Religion is old, very old!* Like the pyramids of Egypt, which for so many centuries have seen the waters of the Nile pass by, so dynasties, republics, empires, and generations pass before Religion! What changes have taken place on the earth! How many shocks, how many convulsions, how many transformations, and yet, amid all this agitation, ruin, and renovation, Religion remains surrounded by immortal youth. Where are those who witnessed her birth, and her persecutions, and those who have insulted her? They prepared her tomb, but they have disappeared, both fathers and sons; she has spread her funeral veil over them, and sung their requiem and the *De Profundis*. She is *old*, but you see no furrows on her brow; her members are covered with scars, but they are glorious scars, and attest her triumph. And must she not be as old as the world? For is not Religion, as we have already seen, the expression of the relations which exist between man and God? Therefore, from the moment that God

designed to create man out of nothing, to give him an intelligence capable of knowing Him, a heart capable of elevating itself to Him on the wings of love, man has had a Father and God has had a Son. And so Religion developed itself according to the needs of man into the perfection of Christianity, and as such was confided to the Church. It has developed, but it has always remained the same, as it was at the beginning, and as it will be to the end.

For God unfolds His designs but does not change them. You say "Religion is old," but what would you say if it were young? You would say, "If it be true, if it be divine, if it be necessary, why has God so long delayed to give it to men? Since humanity has done without it for so long a time, it can still do without it; why should we bear a yoke which our fathers bore not?" And what, in fact, are new religions but the inventions of man's pride and of his corruption? We have seen these religions issue from the offices of their inventors, full of freshness and full of youthfulness, but they have very soon grown old. At first they have excited some attention, but after a while they have fallen into contempt and oblivion. Our religion has not taken alarm, but has said to them, "You come too late: religious men will turn to me and not to you." Antiquity, brethren, is the glory of

our Religion, and the proof of its Divine origin. But you add, "Your Religion has changed, and you profess that it changes not. It is very much changed. At its commencement, we allow it was beautiful, excellent, Divine, the Religion of the Patriarchs and of the Prophets of the Gospel, and of the Apostles, the Religion of the Primitive Church, that also, you say, bore the seal of its Divine origin; but then came the interests of the Priests, the ages of ignorance and barbarism, and time, which devours everything, devoured Religion also." But what mean you by this? Think you that God, the author of our Religion, would have abandoned it to man's caprice? Shall God have been wanting to Himself? The work of mortals is changed and marred by time, but not so the work of God. The sun is continually shining, but its light does not consume it. Spring brings us ever the same flowers, as autumn brings its fruits; night and day alternate by a perpetual unchanging law, and should God abandon His own special work, the work upon which He founds His eternal glory, and in which the consolation of His children consists? In so doing, God would have acted like an artist dissatisfied with his work, who casts it away from him, or like a bad father who will no longer recognize his son. But this were unworthy of God; He could not do so, would not do so, and

has not done so. Has not Jesus Christ said, "I have built My Church upon this Rock, so that the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it?" Has not Jesus said that He will be ever with His Church to the end of the world? Did He not say that He would send His Holy Spirit, that it might be guarded from error? And is not the Church then, my brethren, like an army displayed in battle array, to defend its sacred deposits? If a rash hand dare lift itself against it, or approach the Holy Ark, or the code of revealed truth, does not the Church reject him from her bosom? She gives way to neither force nor cunning, she will not subtract a word from her creed nor change a syllable of her Decalogue. Rather than do so, she has submitted to the loss of her best Eastern conquests and the desertion of England. In the present day, whether before an emperor, a nation, or an individual, we see the poet cringe, and tune his lyre to subserviency, the philosopher become a sophist, and the orator sell his oratory. But the Church? The Church dominates alike people and kings, the Church is always the same—the same under the sword of persecution, as under the glory of hypocritical protection, the same when embraced by those who love her, as when seized in the gripe of her enemies. She despises alike the *opprimamus* of force as the *sapienter* of

cunning. She despises both flattery and menace, which break at her feet like the waves of the tide at the foot of a rock. If you bring the charge of mutation, bring it rather against our poor separated brethren, who have abandoned the Bible to private interpretation, allowing everyone to form his faith from it according to his own mind. But our faith is the faith of the whole Catholic world; our faith is that of past ages, that of confessors, martyrs, and apostles.

Go on board a steamer, and make the tour of the world; where you find a Catholic you find the same creed, the same Decalogue. Evoke the past, we do not fear it; uncover the tombs of our ancient cathedrals, no voice issues thence to accuse us, the very ashes come to life to proclaim our faith. Show us a single article which does not appertain to this universal faith, and we reject it immediately as sacrilege. My brethren, the Catholic, called to the liberty of the children of God, submits her faith to no other but God; the Church herself only speaks in the name of God; she does not make truths, she only preserves and proclaims them. The Catholic depends on Heaven alone, and would preserve his pure, his holy liberty.

“But, father, you exaggerate, the Church has changed. What do you mean to say? Do you

mean that the ceremonies and uses are not the same they once were? That certain ceremonies, certain chaunts, certain prayers have been modified, and that the laws of the Church, though sacred, have been gradually modified by the times?" I not only allow it, but I tell you that the Church may even further modify them for the good of her children. She has a right to do so. But you must remember that discipline is not Religion, but only the dress or garment of Religion. When you put on new clothes, they do not change your nature—you remain the same. So Religion, this child of God, the better to captivate the hearts of men, consents to accommodate itself to their tastes and habits. In this she is like the queen to whom the prophet compared her, who in order to please her spouse, makes greater pomp of her beauty and riches. Religion and the Church at the time of the catacombs had not certainly the same splendour which she had when she sat on thrones and numbered nations and kings among her children. While they suffered, she suffered with them, wearing mourning garments, for her heart is always the same, in adversity as in prosperity. Behold that ancient tree, lord of the forest, under whose shadow weary pilgrims have reposed for ages. In the spring it puts out fresh leaves, and

extends its branches ; if one of these be torn away by the tempest, another shoots forth in its stead, but the tree never changes, it remains ever the same tree. So with Religion. Only while the axe, the course of time, the fury of the tempest, demolish the oak, the Tree of Calvary fears neither tempest nor hurricane, neither the rage of man nor the ravages of time ; it has God's promise, God's immortal promise, and so long as there shall be a man to be consoled and saved, it will bear its immortal fruit.

What a consolation for us, to find our Religion ever the same at all times and in all places. The clouds of error and prejudice may veil her face from our sight, but can never obscure her brilliancy ! And it must be so, my brethren. For if the sun were extinguished, we should be lost in eternal night. And if Religion disappear, how terrible our night ! Shine then, O shine, glorious torch of divinity, shine out upon the world, that men may walk in thy light ! Shine especially upon my beautiful *country*, and if there be among us some blind ones who will not see thee, shine upon these with a still gentler and brighter light to vindicate thy power.

But there is another prejudice. Religion, you say, has rendered great services to humanity when humanity was in a state of infancy, but in its

present riper age it no longer needs her help ! Now, you say, our laws, our consciences, and above all our civilization suffice to replace Religion. So we would treat Religion like a servant, whose services we praise, of whose fidelity we boast, but whom we dismiss as no longer of use to us. Let us consider this. You are ready to recognize the benefits which Religion has conferred on humanity. So far good, but how can you help doing so—great and numerous as you know them to be ? When the Pagan world sank under the weight of its vices and its corruption, Religion, in the form of the Son of God, breathed on its corpse from the Cross, and Christian charity descended from Calvary. When the barbarians, like a devastating torrent, overwhelmed the Greek and Roman Empires, they were checked in their course by the Cross which our Religion presented to them. When Mahomet, aspiring to subject the world to his sword, undertook its conquest, our Religion it was which arrested him at Poitiers, Navarino, and Granada. When our own country was torn by civil wars, Religion threw herself between the ranks of the combatants, to reconcile brethren and pacify feuds. And if it sometimes entered into affairs of State, it was only to protect the oppressed and to frighten tyrants.

And not only did it diffuse through Europe the

principles of civilization. but covered her with monuments of genius and charity. And why should we now banish this benefactress of the human race? Have we no need of her—do the laws suffice? Brethren, I respect the laws, and I boast, or rather, I congratulate myself upon being a disciple of Him who said: “Render unto Cæsar the things which be Cæsar’s.” I allow that the law exercises a beneficial influence on some minds, but upon what minds? Upon those who have Religion, upon those who see in the legislator the representative of God. In short, can you persuade yourselves that the law is a motive and means sufficient to prevent crime, or even to repress it? No! Because the law reaches our actions, but does not reach the thoughts and desires which have their source in morality. Do not intemperance, licence, imposture, and cynicism display themselves openly in books, newspapers, and songs. as well as by obscene caricatures in shop windows? Does not vice walk in our streets with bold step and unblushing mien, scoffing, insulting, and corrupting? Ah! my brethren, say rather that the law is a net which too often lets its prey escape through its widened meshes. You say: “But we have our consciences.” Conscience is the voice of God sounding in the depths of our souls. It is an

inner light by which we walk. But if the conscience become the accomplice of the passions? Mark well that every fresh wound deprives the conscience of strength, and weakens it. Who does not know the fatal influence of habits on the conscience? Would you know what conscience means nowadays? A young man, not long since, proposed it to a publisher, as an infallible criterion of good and evil. Would you know what he replied? "There is nothing less fixed than what you call morality, nothing less arbitrary than conscience. The conscience of one man is not that of another; the conscience of a people is not that of another people; the conscience of one age not that of another age. If you observe, you will be convinced that there is no other criterion but legitimate success, of certain duration, and this is what measures the degrees of civilization." Do you understand? Success is morality, and conscience means civilization, that brilliant garment which hides so much tyranny, so much injustice, so much turpitude. O, let us acknowledge it, brethren, conscience deprived of the light of Religion, abandoned to itself, too often becomes the accomplice of evil; in order that it may protect man from ill, it must be ruled by Religion and fortified by the Spirit of God. And what shall we say of Science? I

will only ask you this simple question: Does Science produce Virtue? Has Science the power to drive crime out of the heart of man, as the light of day drives away the midnight thief? "Woe to Science," says Bossuet; "woe to that science which does not lead to love." Science may develop the mind, but what can it do for the heart? Can it furnish it with springs to lift it above its evil instincts, to raise it beyond those abject regions into which it is drawn by the passions! O, brethren, modern Science is puffed up and inflated with vanity, and therefore its principles have no strength. Do we not often find it making excuses for concupiscence? Do we not often find it using its apparatus to excuse the guilty, to exculpate the criminal? Does it not too often protect guilt, under the pretext of madness, or irresistible force?

Brethren, we are of the number of those who love Science, who love it with a true love; we desire the development of Science, we wish for progress and the perfection of Science, but we would propose as its basis the fear of God and immortality of the soul, we would give as its basis religious teaching. And this is not my opinion alone, but that of one who cannot be suspected of too much affection for the Christian religion. "The increase of instruction," says Cousin, "does

not bring an increase of morality ; it is not instruction, but a strong religious education which produces morality. Where instruction is accompanied by a religious education, good soldiers are forthcoming." So we see that Religion must come before Science. " But," you say, " we have our *civilization*, and we don't know what to do with Religion." Civilization ! But facts are against you. Our age is called by antonomasia the age of civilization ; but is it also an age of probity, an age of justice, an age of good morals, great characters, and of masculine virtues ? If we study our men, our books, and our works, dispassionately, we shall see that Virtue and Science have not walked hand in hand. Does our civilization always bring with it respect for justice, for truth, for honour, for property, or even for life ? I would not calumniate my age, but is it calumny to show by what evils it is threatened amid its greatness ? But you say, " We have our honour ; if all else fail us we still have that." My friends, first of all, what is this honour ? I allow that there is an honour which merits all our veneration, the honour which we have in the depths of our souls, the honour inspired by noble and elevating thoughts, the honour which places itself before God, Supreme Perfection, and says, " Behold my model, the in-

comparable model from which I may not degenerate." This honour surges up from the intimate recesses of the sanctuary of the conscience, inspired by God. But, brethren, to rise to this pure light, to this magnanimous courage, to this high standard of virtue, we must have Religion. Yes, this is Christian honour, Christian honour which is holiness, but holiness has Religion as its base. Honour without religion is like Nebuchadnezzar's statue, whose head was of gold, and whose feet were of clay. But there is another and a common kind of honour, which is called human honour. This honour is only a vain word, a mask of rectitude, worn to cover every vice. This kind of honour is easy, indulgent. The bad father, the bad husband, the bad master, and even the bad citizen, all hide themselves under this cloak of honour. Through it the man who has received an injury will feel no scruple in robbing a mother of her son, a wife of her husband, of taking a citizen from his country, and a soul from God. And yet they call it honour! Is it not rather a mask for shame and dishonour! It is also a very indulgent kind of honour. Remember what Cicero said, "What will not he who only fears witnesses do when unseen?" And we may repeat, What will not he do in darkness who has no other inspiration but that of

honour? My friends, may we fear that they will do as did those ancients of whom Daniel speaks. They were judges of the people, and consequently considered as men of honour, but it did not prevent their hearts from being perverted, nor their eyes from withdrawing from Heaven, and forgetting the justice of God; and when they felt safe from the witness of men, and from censure, when they said, "The doors are closed, who will see us?" what did they! Their honour did not check their passions, nor prevent them from indulging in the basest calumnies, nor did it keep them from the condemnation of a victim. Such is honour without Religion. And yet, how many say with scorn, "Honour speaks." This is my oracle. How many for whom honour, so to speak, is nothing but a phantom of virtue, or the love of glory, the fear of blame and human censure? I would not exaggerate, I believe that these motives may exercise a great influence on upright and generous minds, but for how long? How often men are surrounded by seductions and dominated by interest, and when they have committed some crime, when they have fallen into the abyss, who will help them? Who will raise up? O, brethren, it is not here, it is not in our human nature, it is not in opinion, it is not in the world that man finds energy and strength for the fulfilment of his

duty. He needs Religion. Yes, he needs Religion! Then leave us Religion to teach men that they are brethren; leave us Religion to heal our differences; leave us Religion to console us in our many sorrows, and to comfort and enlarge our minds with hopes of Heaven; give us religion to warm our hearts, seared by egotism, with the beautiful fires of charity; leave us Religion to give strength to our virtue, and to banish vice. Leave us Religion to nourish those ardent souls capable of so much ill and of so much good, who have so exuberant a life, for if Religion does not guide them, they will throw themselves into the arms of sin, and invoke nullity—nullity which hears and answers them not. And thou, O my country, ever beautiful country of Glory and of Faith, preserve thy Religion, preserve it for thyself and for thy greatness, preserve it for the consolation of thy sons, that they may ever recognize in that Religion, under whose shadow thou has grown and flourished, both comfort and strength.

Brethren, there is still another prejudice, and it is a strong prejudice. Men say that *Religion is the enemy of Liberty*, that Religion favours despotism, and this idea is especially affirmed and promulgated to deceive the people and to deceive youth. Does Religion favour despotism? It is

true that Jesus said, "Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's." But who is the Cæsar of the Gospel? It is authority, whatever be its name, whatever be its form, now and always. Religion has always commanded submission and respect under all forms of government. She has also always set herself the first example of submission. But how can Religion be the enemy of Liberty, when Liberty is the daughter of Religion? Where was liberty before the religion of Christ and before Christ? Was it in Rome? You know that the Roman nobles were often the greatest tyrants, and later on the Tribunes were worse tyrants. Was there liberty in Athens? In Athens, liberty for a long time depended on a disgraceful ostracism which feared the superiority and power of glory and virtue. Was it enjoyed in Sparta? But Sparta had its helots. The whole world before Christ was full of slavery and oppression; man oppressed his fellow-men. And who broke these chains, who freed these slaves, who brought light and liberty? Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ called men to the liberty of the Sons of God. Jesus Christ said, "You have but one Master and one Father, who is God. You are all equal in God's sight, because you are all His sons." Thus the reign of equality was formed. Jesus Christ Himself became our example in this

respect. He condescended to the meanest services, He washed the feet of His apostles, and from the heights of Calvary He extended His arms to bless the world. He shed His blood and left His merits for all men. He left to all the hope of enjoying His glory in Heaven. It was then, O brethren, that the reign of liberty was established ! There, upon Calvary, at the foot of the Cross, miserable slaves became invested with the majesty and glory of Jesus Christ, and obtained that liberty of soul which is the mother of all true liberty. The Christian Religion lives on liberty, asks naught but liberty, and when liberty is denied it, obtains it through martyrdom.

Look at the apostles ; they were menaced by the Jews, and S. Peter says to them, “ Ye have killed Him who lived among you doing good, and who is risen from the dead, of which we are witnesses.” They are forbidden to preach His doctrine and are beaten with rods, but they answer that it is better to obey God rather than men, and go rejoicing to be found worthy to suffer death for His sake. S. Paul, in his prison, makes the proconsul tremble ; strong in his innocence, he appeals to Cæsar and makes good his rights of citizenship. He refuses the liberty offered him by the gaoler, and says, “ My judges are they who should free me.” And they come

trembling. And in the course of three centuries we behold the martyrs, men who brave their executioners, who brave their tyrants; and the pontiffs, before whom the proconsul exclaimed, "Never, never have I seen the like of such men;" S. Ambrosio, who forbids the entrance of the Temple to Theodosius, fresh from the massacre of the Thessalonians, and S. John Chrysostom issues from it to reprove the Empress Theodosia, because she had oppressed a widow. And S. Francis of Assisi forbids his followers to go to see Otho of Brunswick on his return from Rome, where he had allowed himself to be crowned Emperor. The body of the true Christian may be enchained, but his soul is ever free. In an electoral struggle, which ended in triumph for Otho, a poor peasant was found imprisoned for debt. He is told that he will be released and his debts paid if he will vote against the defender of his country. Weak in character and needy, he was about to place in the urn the schedule which the enemies of Otho had given him, when his wife, who had instructed him in the Christian Religion, approached him and said, "Unhappy wretch, what doest thou? Remember your soul and your liberty!" Noble words, which became the cry of the national party and the device of the Normans. Let us mention another fact. Alphonse Karr, in 1848, was

accused by the *Club de Rouhan*, and the President, turning to him, said, "Citizen, you are accused of saying that during the universal suffrage votes were sold for three francs." He replied, "I unsay it." "That is well," said the President. "I unsay it, because on my way hither I saw two men in a café. One of them was treating another to a drink for the promise of his vote. So that it is no longer a question of votes at three francs, but of twenty or fifty centimes!" The Protestant Guizot says, "That when man no longer believes, the love of liberty declines; it is no longer sincerely loved. When in man we see only matter, he must submit to the laws of force." For which reason S. Augustine said: "Liberty is beautiful and great, but the foundation of liberty is the liberty of the soul." And when the soul is a slave, both family and people are slaves. And who then shall assure us liberty? None but Christ, who said, "If ye remain in My word, ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." So that those who would banish Jesus Christ and His Religion, destroy the last bulwarks of liberty. And we may expect to behold in the distance a man appearing to repeat Jurgurtha's words, "The buyer alone is wanting," Machiavelli said: "If you shut the church's doors, you must open prison doors." And I add, if you break the

cross, you must bow beneath the sword. Jesus alone can preserve the liberty of men. The people know it, and where their heart is not perverted, they turn to Christ. Liberty is the grand cry of the day, but what do we see instead? Brute force multiplied, permanent armies and homicidal weapons increased, prisons and mad-houses more abundant.

O, then, let us return to the Religion of our fathers, to the true, sincere and old Religion; let us return to Christianity, to our fathers who suffered evil, but did not exalt it into a principle; to our fathers who believed and prayed, and found liberty in faith and prayer. Let us return to that Christianity which made our country the field of those glorious Republics and Communes which were crowned with glory on the plains of Lombardy and by the waters of the Lepanto. Let us return to the Religion of the Creed and the Decalogue, which reassume all social constitutions in the article, "All things are yours, for ye are Christ's and Christ is God's."

XXX.

THE PASSION.

BRETHREN, *Sic dilexit*—"God so loved us." In all creation these words resound. "He so loved us;" every creature repeats it; day telleth it unto day and night telleth it unto night; "each blade of grass, each grain of dust recounts it in its varied way."

Creation is not God's highest work; His highest work is redemption. In redemption the love of God to man is seen in its full splendour; it reveals His omnipotence, it reaches to its utmost bounds.

Redemption is, undoubtedly, the triumph of infinite love; its beginning and its end, its *alpha* and *omega*, its basis and its zenith.

The gravity of our wounds, the depths of our miseries, the woes of our lot required a holocaust, a sacrifice, *the* sacrifice of the only begotten Son of God, and God did not refuse; He so loved us as to give His only begotten Son.

In that fierce contest in which justice and peace contended for victory, victory was equal on both

sides. "Justice and peace kissed each other." But this kiss of peace of which the prophet speaks is a kiss of love—the love of the Father who planned the event; the love of the Son who accepted it; the love of the Holy Ghost who executed it.

"He so loved us."

In this operation the love of God for man was a love of preference. We were preferred to angels, whose fall was not restored; we were preferred even to His own Son; His very heir was put to death for us, to endow us with His grace.

His love is all the more generous because gratuitous. Almighty God having in Himself the fulness of being, as says S. Augustine, suffices for Himself. To say He has need to seek love externally to Himself would be an insult to Him.

"He loved us" for the sake of loving us, and I ask you what could He look for in man, which could excite Him even to a desire for union?

A great apostle tells us: "Whilst hardly for another a friend is forced to die, the Almighty Father sacrificed His only Beloved, in whom He was well-pleased." And for whom? For sinners—obstinate sinners—and ungrateful.

Astounding gift! What can be greater than

Christ our Lord? What could be more humiliating than the sacrifice of the Cross, and what more despicable than the proud and obstinate sinner for whom that sacrifice was made?

And yet, God in His mercy overlooked the infinite distance. We were afar off and He brought us near, and the blood of Jesus is the link of that undying union.

In this embrace of love, infinite greatness has become one with infinite misery, and possesses henceforth its power, its wisdom, its holiness, its glory.

“He so loved us.”

God’s love has no limits; it is love in the extreme.

It was not enough that the word became flesh, but it willed also to take to itself the weakness of infancy, which even the first Adam never knew.

Why choose to be begarbed in culprit’s gear, hiding His dignity from all? If, as a second Isaac, He gave Himself up to be immolated by His Father, why hide the great oblation under the ignominy of a public execution?

Why? I answer, because any other form would have diminished the splendour of the love of God, because otherwise He could not have so clearly manifested the riches of His love.

In order that the greatness of this love should shine in all its plenitude, the amorous “foolishness” of the Cross, of Gethsemane, of the Prætorium, of Calvary, were a necessity. And these themes it is, brethren, which Holy Church invites us to meditate on to-day, if only I, unworthy, can rightly direct your thoughts thereon.

Jeremiah, seated on the ruins of Jerusalem, could not contain himself from weeping in sight of the spectacle before his eyes; and so, how can I unmoved dilate on the sufferings, on the humiliations, on the death of our Lord? But do it I *must*, compelled by Christ Himself, and, if words fail me, if I cannot express myself as I ought, I will add my tears to yours; with you I will tread the path of sorrow.

But who shall be our guide? Be thou, O sacred Cross, the especial object of to-day’s devotion. O, sweetest Cross, before which I pay my heartfelt homage; bearing aloft our Jesus on thine arms thou art become our harbour of refuge; bound to thee together with our Lord, hang all our hopes. Blessed Cross! hard bed on which our Father died, tell us now all thou hast suffered, but first give us assurance of thy pardon, for we could not endure the recital of that fearful passion He underwent upon thee; did we not hope that from thee shall be poured a

treasure of grace, strengthening the just and bringing sinners to repentance.

“Hail, Cross, our hope! to thee we call
Who keep this mournful festival.”

Brethren, many were the reasons for which our Lord offered Himself to suffer that cruel agony which the evangelists relate to us—but above all was it to expiate our sins; and as there are among men sins of the heart, sins of the mind, sins of the body, so would He pay the penalty of each in particular.

In the garden of Gethsemane He had in view the sins of the heart. Having loved His own in the world, He gave them the most touching proof of that love in the sacrament of His body and blood—the very masterpiece, so to say, of his love; the compendium of all His miracles—and then He leaves the supper-room for Gethsemane, the innocent victim going up to the altar of sacrifice.

Behold Him in the garden! It was in a garden—a garden of delights—that the first sin took place, and it is in a garden that Jesus chooses to expiate it through the agony of His own body.

Leaving His disciples behind He goes forward into the dark wooded depths in silence and in

solitude. Night had fallen, earth was wrapt in darkness, and Jesus is there, prostrate and in prayer, when suddenly His cheeks are blanched; the beatings of His heart seem to stand still, and a tremor passes over His frame. He rises, He feels the need of sympathy, He goes near to the apostles. "Beloved," He says, "My heart is sorrowful even unto death; beyond what words can say."

But who gave heed? They were sleeping! Yet He had bidden them watch and to watch praying. Alas, my Jesus! Not even one hour could they watch for Thee!

He returns to pray, rises again, comes a second time, but finds them again immersed in slumber. Once more He turns, once more He prays, but still the apostles sleep on. At length the oppression of His soul has reached its culminating point. He lifts His eyes to heaven and with sobs exclaims: "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not My will but Thine be done."

Brethren, does not this language of the Saviour seem strange? He had been used to thank; sure that nothing would be refused Him from on high. Now He prays, He entreats, He conjures that this cup may pass from Him—the cup of the Passion. But more wondrous still is the silence of His

Heavenly Father, who now turns a deaf ear to the voice of His Son and leaves the bitter draught to be carried to His lips, and no relief vouchsafed to His suffering.

Some of you object. How could a God suffer? How could a God be sorrowful? S. Paul has already answered you. He took upon Him our sins and our infirmities to expiate our guilt, He was made flesh for love of us, and, being man, humbled Himself for our sakes.

Let us for a moment consider more deeply the cause of this deep grief of His soul. At that moment He saw before Him arranged in fierce display all the torments He was shortly to go through. The betrayal of Judas, the denial of Peter, the buffets and the spittings of the Roman soldiery, the flagellation, the crown of thorns; the bearing of the cross and pains of Calvary—all in their horror and their blackness were arrayed before His eyes and pierced His heart with poignant agony.

Yes, thus all together present to His mind were even more a cause of suffering than these later; one by one He fell under the face of each. Can we then wonder that His heart was sorrowful?

Still, we have not yet guessed the truest source of His deep sorrow. He had said, "I have a baptism to be baptized with and I am straitened

till it be accomplished," but now, when the moment is come, fear seems to ice His courage and He prays that the trial may pass away! Ah, brethren, there is a great mystery here which we must penetrate. Yes, truly, the sorrow of Jesus arises from a deeper source than any we have yet spoken of; it arises from sin—from offences done against God.

Isaiah explains it in the words, "He hath laid upon Him the iniquity of us all."

Who can imagine what Jesus felt at the sight of all those sins? Just think of their number and their intensity—not one is hidden from Him in that gaze. From the first sin of Adam to that of the last of his sons, nothing is hidden. Try to form an idea, brethren, if you can, of the tremendous burden which weighed upon Him. Sins committed in all times and all places. These, as black clouds, surrounded Him; turn where He will, to the right or to the left, the air is full of the horrid sight. As torrents of iniquity they assail Him on every side; there is no refuge from them for Him. He must drink the cup, and drink it to the dregs.

As when the people took up stones to throw at Him, so now did all the world hurl *each* his stone, and not only *they*, but *you* and *I*. Your sins and mine were there, adding their poignancy

to what He then went through. And can we think of it without tears ?

Ah ! could He but have seen that His sufferings were to be crowned with fruit. To save mankind He would, if needful, have gone through even *more* if necessary ; but, alas, in spite of all, He knew that many would be lost. He knew that one drop of His blood could have saved *all*, yet that shedding *all*, many would have no profit from it—that, indeed, the precious blood so scorned would only serve to increase the flames of divine justice and sink deeper in perdition the souls of those who tread it under foot. This it is which causes His overwhelming grief.

Brethren, well to understand the inward dolours of our Lord we must look deeper into the mystery of His love. We have seen Him weep over the grave of Lazarus, we have seen Him moved by the grief of a widowed mother, we have seen Him shed tears over the woes about to fall on Jerusalem, His beloved city, and now these pass in sad sequence before Him, the souls of those who refuse the offers of His salvation, and who, though sprinkled with His blood, go on heedless to perdition.

Oh, ye souls, created in His image, it is for you He bleeds, and He feels it all the more because He sees that it will only add to your condemna-

tion. I hear Him cry: "In vain is this shedding of My blood; in vain for you have I laboured. Born in poverty, living in obscurity, soon will My flesh be torn by flagellations, soon shall I die the death of infamy, and you are not moved. It was to save you, but you refused to be saved!"

This it is which adds the finishing stroke to the agonies of Jesus; and fully to comprehend it we should know how much He loved.

He is worn out with grief, His very knees can sustain Him no longer. He falls to the ground. From His eyes, from every pore of His body come drops of blood; His garments, the earth around Him is wet with the same.

O, unspeakable agony! O, torment beyond the power of words to tell! He would have died of it—there where he lay, was He not reserving Himself to yet further pain.

Shall then this blood poured out for the health of my soul—shall it, I say, be lost?

Brethren, remember it is the blood of a God which flows. Can we know it and remain unmoved? Can we withhold our tears when we dwell on the thought of it?

Consider within yourselves how these unspeakable pangs are caused by *your* sins. If the remembrance of one misdeed caused the holy prophet of old to weep night and day, can your

heart's calmly listen to the recital of what He endured for you? Measure your iniquities by what they cost Him. Let that thought show you their heinousness.

Truly, indeed, did the prophet say, "He hath borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows."

Who shall share His grief? Who shall sustain Him under it? Come, ye pious souls, who love Him. Come, angels of Heaven, strengthen Him, for He has yet more to go through.

And you, brethren, who would desire to console Him, see in the many erring souls around you an image of the Lord, and labour on at least to save one soul. Thus can you best console the heart of Jesus, who will be spared the agony of having—for that soul—not suffered all in vain.

Brethren, many sins are of the mind—pride, arrogance, self-esteem—so now we shall see Jesus atoning for these our sins by His humiliation.

He rises from His blood-sweat grander and nobler than before. He has gathered strength from it. With that majesty which was peculiarly His, He draws nearer to His apostles and says: "Rise now, he that betrayeth Me is at hand."

He does not shrink from the approaching danger. He goes to meet all the insults which evil men had prepared for Him—a lesson to us how we ought always to rely on God's providence, and how,

trusting in God's help, and after earnest prayer, we shall not fail to triumph over sin.

At this moment Judas—one of the twelve—and a band of soldiers, sent by the chief priests, and the scribes, and the ancients, advance in order to seize Him. What did I say? Judas?—one of the apostles?—one of the witnesses of His miracles?—a man admitted to personal intercourse, honoured with the priesthood, clothed with the power of apostleship? Oh, wonder of human depravity!

Yes—Judas had gone to the enemies of Jesus, and had bargained with them for thirty pieces of silver. “Oh, Judas,” once exclaimed a pious soul, “why not have come and treated with me? I would have bought Him with all I possess, and have hidden Him within my breast.” But he had kept his intention to himself. “Hail, Master,” he says. The words pierced the very soul of Jesus. A father is betrayed by his son—a friend by one who called himself his friend. Jesus had left no effort untried to win the soul of Judas. He had humbled Himself to wash his feet. He had fed him with His own Body, and now He sees Himself betrayed!

Still He makes a last effort, and with ineffable tenderness—which might have moved the hardest heart—he says, “Friend, wherefore art thou come? What is thy purpose?” *Friend?* Ah, brethren,

these words which might have moved a heart of stone did not penetrate the heart of Judas. He puts his lips against the lips of Jesus—this was the sign agreed upon. He betrayed the Son of Man with a kiss. Ah, wretch! ah, traitor! Full soon this kiss will be returned to thee by Satan with lips of fire, in the abyss towards which thou art hurrying.

Miserable man. Your only consolation is—if it be a consolation—that you are not the only one who betrays Jesus. You have set example of a crime till now unknown in hell itself, but henceforth too often to be followed. Jesus in glory; Jesus in the Eucharist has many Judases.

Ye angels of the sanctuary, how often have ye not blushed to see the approach thereto of sacrilegious worshippers? In spite of an outward semblance of piety, within were the heart and the kiss of Judas.

What can I say to such? No more hope for you for ever. Hide yourselves from the eye of Him whom you have betrayed.

Brethren, my mouth refuses to pronounce such words against them—it would be blaspheming. Rather will I point to Jesus, and with Jesus say, “Friend, I, whom you have betrayed, am still your friend—only *repent*. For Judas did Me a lesser injury by his parricide than by his despair.

Turn to me in penitence—For you too was My Blood shed ; one word, one tear of sorrow for your sins and thou shalt be saved.”

No sooner had he given the sign than the soldiers surrounded Jesus, and He, to show that He died because He willed to die—by one word struck them to the ground. Having given this proof of His Divinity He offered no resistance, and was by them bound and led to Jerusalem.

What a spectacle to the world ! What a humiliation for Jesus ! Five days before He entered in triumph into Jerusalem. The people flocked around Him with acclamations and carrying palm branches before Him, and now the people press near, but only to mock and to deride. Who is so weak as to trust the world and its applause ?

Yesterday's hosannas will soon be turned into “Crucify Him !”

The recollection of what He met with may well console us in like case.

He is taken to the house of Annas—His greatest opposer. He is seated on a sort of tribunal ; on his right hand and on his left are Scribes and Pharisees, with hatred written on their faces, with contempt upon their lips ; and these interrogate their victim.

His answers are mildness itself ; they are dictated by humility and by truth—yet one of the

servants of the High Priest dares to strike Him on the face with iron glove, saying, "Dost thus answer the High Priest?"

The French poet Corneille has said that a blow on the face is a mortal stroke in the world ; many such a blow has caused a duel to the death ; such an insult calls for blood to avenge it ; yet Jesus says not a word !

This, however, is but the beginning. "Confusion hath covered my face." Hear what He says : Confusion as a veil has covered Me !

Then to Caiphas is he led ; a mock trial is set up, and witnesses are examined. But in all climes and in all times speech is allowed in favour of the accused, in every legalized form of judgment. Here, who was advocate for Him ? Why are ye silent, ye blind, ye halt, ye lame, ye lepers whom He healed ? Come, show yourselves boldly, and tell all men what He hath done for you. Not one appears. Not one has the courage to link his name with His. His very disciples—where are they ? One has betrayed Him, another denied Him, the rest, all have fled.

Ah, my brethren, what a sorry weight is that of the treachery of a friend ; the heartlessness of one who has received benefits from us in times of his trouble.

Instead of being surrounded by disciples, by

recovered sick, by restored blind, none appear but enemies—false witnesses and the like. List to the proceedings. That iniquitous judge puts the question, “Art Thou the Son of God?” And Jesus, in majestic tranquillity, responds: “Thou hast said it; and thou one day shalt see the Son of Man coming on the right hand of His Father, with power and great majesty, amidst the clouds, to judge the world.”

But at these words, which should have commanded reverence, the High Priest rends his clothes and exclaims, “No need of witnesses; we have heard Him. He has spoken blasphemy.”

Oh, wretch that thou art. *Thou* has spoken blasphemy. He will one day be *thy* judge. Do you not discern the God-head in Him, although bound in chains which you have clenched!

Then the servile band of his dependents cried too, together with him: “He is guilty of death.”

Wherever humanity exists, the man condemned to death acquires by that very fact a kind of sacred character, and however guilty he may be, he excites a feeling of compassion. Jesus alone excites no compassion. He is given up to the rough soldiery, who insult Him, who strike Him, who spit upon Him, and yet He utters no word of complaint.

During the night that followed a still heavier blow was to fall upon Him.

We all know that no trial is greater, more galling, and more deep-pointed than to see a friend of long standing ashamed of one's friendship; an open persecutor causes far less pain.

See, then, the apostle whom our Lord had chosen for the chief amongst the others, he who first had borne witness to His Divinity, he who had boasted he would be ready to die for Him rather than forsake—Peter it was—who waiting without, to know the issue of the judgment, when taxed by a maid-servant with being of His party, who answered: "I know Him not." Again, on her insistence, for a second and a third time he answered trembling, and with an oath, "I know Him not."

What a fall was this, my brethren; what a fearful fall. What an unworthy concession to public opinion, to which so many now bow. How many begin by saying, "Rather die than deny thee," and yet for a word, for a look of disapproval from the world, all is forgotten.

My brethren, we have seen the fall of Peter—so now, if ever we have weakly failed as did he, so let us imitate him in his repentance.

Our Lord—in the midst of His sufferings—turned and looked upon Peter, and he, repentant, wept

bitterly. O, good Lord Jesus, when shall the same look bring *me* to penitence?

In like manner Jesus still looks on us who have sinned; could we only realize it, and together with this His goodness, the enormity of our transgression, or—better still—could we consider beforehand that He sees us, we should surely never have such boldness as to dare offend Him under His very eyes.

As soon as day dawned Jesus is led to Herod, then from Herod to Pilate, and from Pilate to Herod again. This latter had been desirous to see Him, hoping for a miracle. But never for idle curiosity did our Lord work miracles. He hid Himself from the great and proud ones of earth; but Herod, in his disappointment, had dismissed Him in the white garb of a fool.

About mid-day the streets were filled by the populace, and in this ludicrous attire He passed in their midst.

Pride must be a deep-seated sin indeed, since it necessitated such reparation.

Then before Pilate took place a scene of horror; the nation of the Jews denying the Lord. O, ingratitude beyond words of His own chosen people.

We know not which is more reprehensible, the voice of the multitude, or the weakness of the

judge, who acknowledges His innocence, but who lacks the courage to pronounce it.

He is interrogated, but is silent; He is accused, but offers no defence; the Gospels only record His silence. O, most eloquent silence! It condemns not only all calumnies and all vituperations, but also even our susceptibilities.

Jesus endures the greatest insults, and although He is sanctity itself, He stands there as though a leper. And if so, what are we?

We are so apt to meet evil with evil, insult with insult; we cannot keep in the bitternesses which we feel. Ah, my brethren, by His example—for His sake—do thus no longer let us keep our troubles in our own hearts. A hidden cross is a precious treasure. Trusting in Jesus, we cannot fail to find true consolation.

But what is that cry that is raised? “Not this one, but Barabbas!”

What humiliation for a man could be greater than to be put on a par with one every way His inferior—let alone his being a base-born wretch and a criminal; yet this, too, is another abasement. He is called on to suffer. Imprisoned as a malefactor, a leader of sedition, and a murderer was one concerning whom Pilate asked the Jews, “Whom shall I release to you, this man or Barabbas?” and the people answered . . . But

I tremble ere I can give you their response. I ask myself, Have not I too preferred the enjoyment of the moment, the satisfaction of a passion to my Lord and Saviour, and thus driven Him from my heart?

Then Pilate asks again, "What shall I do with this man?"

They answer, "Crucify Him! We will not have Him to reign over us. Crucify Him! Crucify Him!"

"Why? What evil hath He done? Is He not your king?"

"Crucify Him!" they insist. "We have no king but Cæsar. His blood be on us and on our children."

Ungrateful race! Truly His blood has left a stain upon their foreheads, and their dispersion is a standing proof of the Divinity of Jesus.

Pilate was much moved by this sanguinary declaration, and with ill-judged decision thought to effect our Lord's deliverance by condemning Him to flagellation.

Iniquitous judge. If He were guilty, rightly condemn; but if no evil be proved against Him, why condemn Him at all? Better proclaim His innocence, and die with Him, if need be.

Thus does the world in semblance proclaim its innocence by washing its hands in public and

putting fair words forward. Can he who condemns the innocent ever be other than guilty?

His sentence is carried out. O God, what do I see? Jesus is given up to the executioners! He is bound to a column—He is stripped of His garments—His back is torn with stripes—His blood flows gushing over all His limbs—the hands and arms of His tormentors are wet with it, too—the scourgers are soaked with it—all around is blood! *His blood!* The jailers are unmoved—not touched either by the innocence or the patient endurance of their victim. They weary of their horrid work, and others, of fresher force, succeed, adding stripe unto stripe, till there is no whole part left whereon to act. Our blessed Lord's eyes are raised notwithstanding, and the look of love He casts around says plainly to each of us, "It is for you and for your salvation."

They are not yet content with the state of ignominy to which they have borne Him. They recall the words, "The Christ was King." So they cry, "Let us make Him a crown." The broken column to which he had been bound became His throne—the purple of derision His royal mantle—His sceptre a reed—His crown a garland of thorns. Careful of themselves they press it down upon His brow with rods, to spare

their own hands ; His blood flows down in streams, and veils both eyes and ears and face.

Surely with this ye will be sated, O unbelieving Jews.

So thinks Pilate, who presents Him to the mob, and cries, "Ecce Homo. Behold the man. Behold your work."

Our pride often makes us try to be as God ; and to expiate that pride He loses the very form and comeliness of humanity.

Behold the man. He is as a worm, and no man—the reproach of men and the outcast of the people.

Behold the man. He is, as it were, a leper—as one struck by God and afflicted.

Behold the man, O pious souls. Behold your King. Behold Him to whom you have vowed allegiance, and never again shrink from pain.

Behold the man. Ye who think to save your souls without struggle and without sacrifice, gaze on Him now, and think no effort too great to secure your eternal salvation, or to prove your love for Him.

Fellow sinners, "Behold the man." These words imprinted in our hearts will be to us the pledge of pardon and of hope.

The day will come when, instead of "Behold

the man," we shall hear, "Behold the witness of your life—behold your Judge." How then shall we bear His righteous indignation? By the love of Jesus, by your own soul, by all you hold dearest. Delay not, His arms are open to receive you. "Behold the man." Behold Him who is ready to pardon all. Rise up, my soul, and behold your Lord and Saviour. Hear you not the voice of God Himself proclaiming, "Behold my Son whom you have brought thus low."

O! God of goodness and of love, touch the hearts of all here present that they may turn to Thee by a miracle of Thy mercy well suited to this solemn day.

Hardly had the crowd pronounced that cry, "Let Him be crucified," than Pilate, falling from weakness to weakness, from one act of cowardice to another, gives Jesus up into the hands of His enemies to be led to death.

The cross is brought in order that He may bear it on His own shoulders. Jesus presses it to His breast. It seems impossible that He should carry it without being crushed by its weight, so completely has His strength been exhausted. But what nature cannot do, love can perform; and laden with the cross He goes without the city to die, as a chieftain, for the good of his people.

But before leaving the city He turns once more—so dear to Him was Jerusalem.

O Jesus, whither art Thou going?

“I go to die—to die for you, and when I am dead remember Me and what I suffered for you, and love Me at least a little.”

But see what a multitude accompany Him. First go the trumpeters, on each side of Him are malefactors, and behind an insulting crowd, and soldiers, who fail to restrain them.

Was ever such a sight before? A God bearing His cross for the good of His creatures!

Hear what He says: “He that would come after me must take up his cross and follow Me.” He has every right to require this of us, He who first bore the weight of it.

Let us, then, accept the yoke. *He* knows how to make it easy to us; He who has the secret of lightening every burden. He assures us the reward of our sufferings in Heaven. The soldier turns not back when his captain leads the way to victory, and shall we turn back when He who is *our* Captain invites us to follow Him? Will we not rather, like the Cyrenian, help Him to bear the Cross?

Would I had been there, a witness of that sublime abandonment of self, no greater joy could I have had than to bear it with my Lord.

During this painful progress He meets the women of Jerusalem weeping as they went. With a heavenly smile, He exclaims, "Weep not for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children."

Then He meets His Blessed Mother. Poor stricken Mother! She sees Her Divine Son sinking under the cross; His face so covered with spittings and with blood that she can scarce trace out the well-known features of the Redeemer of the World.

"O, my Son! my Son!" exclaims the Mother.

"Ah, Mother! Mother!" answers He.

Son and Mother.

What agony in those two words! God only, who can count the stars of heaven and the sand of the sea, can tell the depths of that woe.

Mary lifts to Heaven Her tearful eyes, and, as Jesus had said in Gethsemane, so now she says: "Not my will, but Thine be done."

From that moment she never lost sight of Her Son.

At length the procession halts—fearful halt—it has reached Calvary.

What a spectacle it is! An angel announced the Incarnation; celestial bands chanted melodious anthems over His birthplace; other mysteries of

His life were sung by angels; but where are they now? He is there—He is alone; He is abandoned. Rudely stripped of His raiment, which adhered by blood to His flesh, He is thrown to the ground, and then stretched upon the cross.

Nails are driven in—on the right hand and on the left; and on the feet sounds that fearful battering which makes the echoes of Calvary to resound with groaning.

His blood bathes the nails, the cross, the hammer, and even the hands of the executioners.

At so great agony His face shows what He feels—it expresses pain beyond words; yet from His lips not a syllable of reproach.

Oh, justice of God! Thy strokes are terrible, and, like Thyself, overpoweringly great!

And all this had to be added to the agonies of Gethsemane! Calvary had yet to come!

All this while the cross is being raised; the pit has been dug, and it falls into it with a fearful thud! Each wounded member of the victim feels the stroke, as it widens the opening and renews the former flow.

The sacrifice is near its consummation.

At that moment the sun hides its rays; mysterious darkness spreads over the earth to hide the dying struggles of that smitten form.

Truly here was verified the prophecy.

“He was as a worm, and no man,” “The reproach of men, and the outcast of the people.”

Whilst all this was occurring, what do I see?

I see the soldiers casting lots for His garments, and I see His enemies deriding Him; and I ask myself, How could they? Yes, how *could* they?

Meanwhile I see Him, irresponsible to those insults and those jeers, raise His eyes to Heaven and speak.

Is He about to invoke the wrath of His Father to bring vengeance on His insulters and on His executioners? No, *no*, my brethren. This very hour has closed the Reign of Justice, and the Reign of Mercy—with the flowing of His blood—has begun. Henceforward 'tis the Reign of Love, in proof of which His lips open only for a prayer of mercy and forgiveness, saying, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. They are Thy sons and My brethren; open to them, O, Father, Thine arms of mercy, as now I open mine.” Then turning His head to the right He looks upon the thief on that side; casting on him a smile of love, He says, “This day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise.”

Again He opened His lips to speak. Let us hasten to gather His last words, His last legacy.

What can He have more to say? He has bequeathed us His blood, His example, His word. Is it not all? No, one precious treasure yet remains—His Mother. And now He speaks. We hear Him say to S. John, as to us, “Behold your Mother;” and to her He says, “Behold your son.” O, Holy Mother, who hast thus become *my* mother, never let it be said that so great a gift has been slighted by me. Never be it said that I have rejected so great a boon.

And the next scene, and the last, is the consummation. “It is finished.” The end has come—the end of justice is attained; the sacrifice is done, and our salvation is assured. Jesus bows His head, the light of His eyes is extinguished. His lips closed. After thirty years of hidden and obscure life, and three of wandering and teaching, persecuted by enemies, deserted by friends and abandoned even by His Father in Heaven, He dies.

“He is dead.”

He died because He loved us; He died for love of our souls. He died that we might never die. Brethren, let our hearts take their fill of this last token of love, this proof of intermingled love and sorrow. See, see that livid face, those tortured hands, those torn and lacerated feet,

that heart more deeply wounded by grief than by the spear. Let these be our refuge and the hiding-place of our lives. Brethren, was there ever any day better suited to convert us to God than this which records the death of Christ? Dying, He asked pardon for us all; and can those loving looks be quenched in death without moving our hearts? Are we more hard to gain than the thief on His right hand? Are we harder than the rocks which rent when He expired? He gave His blood—can we withhold a tear? But tears are not all He asks—what He wants are good intentions and solid resolutions, deeds as well as words.

O, good Jesus, who didst say that “when Thou wast lifted up Thou wouldst draw all men to Thee,” fulfil now Thy saying. If in all this congregation there be but one still wanting in love to Thee, if there be one who, turning a deaf ear to Thy loving appeal, refuses to hear Thee tell of pardon, and whose heart be closed against Thee, bound in the servitude of vice and sin, O, good Jesus, fulfil Thine own words, and work in him a miracle of mercy and love, so that none may remain without the range of Thy great pity, and that having heard the history of all that Thou hast suffered for us he may esteem himself happy to bear the cross after Thee. (Then raising the

crucifix to bless the congregation.) O, yes, oh, Lord, deign to bless us all. This is the sincerest prayer of my soul ; let none be excluded from Thy benediction, and may it be to all a pledge of that higher blessing which Thou Thyself wilt give us when we come to know Thee better in Thy kingdom in Heaven.

THE END.

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